DAISY MAYME

By GEORGE KELLY

UEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th St., New York

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AIN'T SUPPOSED TO DIE A NATURAL DEATH
"PROGRESS MAY HAVE BEEN ALL RIGHT ONCE—
BUT IT WENT ON TOO LONG"
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MACK AND MABEL • LITTLE MARY SUNSHINE

Information on Request

SAMUEL FRENCH, Inc.

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#1

DAISY MAYME

Daisy Mayme

A COMEDY

By George Kelly

SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.
25 West 45th Street, New York 10036
7623 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood 90046
London *Toronto*

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"You can do it; but you've got to get over all your illusions first — especially your illusions about your own people. That's what *I* had to do. And I've been a happy woman ever since. Ever since I woke up to the fact that they'll let the willing horse pull the load."

MISS PLUNKETT.

"Daisy Mayme", by George Kelly, was presented by Rosalie Stewart at the Playhouse, New York City, on the night of Monday, October 25, 1926, with the following cast:

Ruth Fenner	*Nadea Hall*
Mrs. Laura Fenner	*Alma Kruger*
Mrs. Olly Kipax	*Josephine Hull*
Cliff Mettinger	*Carlton Brickert*
May Phillips	*Madge Evans*
Daisy Mayme Plunkett	*Jessie Busley*
Charlie Snyder	*Frank Rowan*
Mr. Filoon	*Roy Fant*

Play staged by the Author

DAISY MAYME

ACT I

A room in the home of Clifford Mettinger, on a Saturday afternoon in early May.

Ruth is dusting the keys of a baby grand piano, up in the alcove at the right. She is wearing a plain mourning dress and a small fancy apron.

MRS. FENNER (*out at the right*)

Ruth!

RUTH

Yes?

[*She straightens up and looks toward the door at the right, forward: then moves down towards the door. Her mother appears at the door, wearing a bungalow apron, over a mourning dress, and with a towel in her hand.*

MRS. FENNER

You're surely not playing that piano, are you, Ruth?

RUTH (*returning to the piano*)

No, I was just dusting the keys.

MRS. FENNER (*crossing up to the windows at the back*)

Well, go easy about it; I could hear it out in the kitchen.

RUTH (*coming away from the piano and crossing to the upper window at the left, to shake the dust-cloth out*)

I'm finished now.

MRS. FENNER

A person passing might think we were playing the piano.

RUTH

I thought it was locked.

MRS. FENNER (*moving to the piano*)

It ought to be locked, before some one starts playing on it. But I don't think there's any key for it; I never remember seeing one.

[*She closes the piano.*

RUTH (*shaking the cloth*)

I wonder what May'll do about her practice now.

MRS. FENNER

She'll have to let her practice go I suppose, or practice somewhere else; she certainly can't use this piano now for a while. (*She comes away from the piano, and Ruth crosses towards her*) Have you finished up in here?

RUTH

Yes; you can take this cloth out with you.

MRS. FENNER

Pull that shade down a bit over there; and see that the front is all right.

[*Ruth crosses back to the window at the left.*

RUTH

I think these plants on the side porch here ought to have a bit of water.

[*She lowers the shade.*

MRS. FENNER (*turning at the right door*)

Well, go round to the back and see if there isn't a watering-can around there somewhere; I think I've seen one out there. (*Ruth opens the door up at the left*) And be careful of that dress, Ruth, and those slippers (*the door closes after Ruth, and Mrs. Fenner turns to go out at the right*) if you're going to water plants.

[*After a second's pause the door up at the left opens again*

and Ruth thrusts her head in eagerly and calls across toward the right door.

RUTH

Mama!

MRS. FENNER (*from the right*)

What?

RUTH

Come here for a minute.

[*She glances out the door, over her shoulder, then looks back again to the right door, waiting for her mother. Mrs. Fenner appears in the doorway.*

MRS. FENNER

What is it?

RUTH

Aunt Olly just got off the trolley.

MRS. FENNER (*stepping up to the windows at the back*)

At the corner?

RUTH (*stepping to the upper window at the left*)

Yes, she's coming up this side.

MRS. FENNER

It's a nice time she's coming, when everything's done.

RUTH (*turning from the window to go out the door again*)

I hardly knew her; she's got a whole new rig on.

MRS. FENNER

What's she doing with another new rig.

[*Ruth closes the door, and her mother peers through the window at the back, then hurries across towards the left.*

RUTH (*speaking very low, through the upper window at the left*)

She has another hat on, too.

MRS. FENNER

Yes, I see she has. Listen, Ruth —

RUTH
What?

MRS. FENNER
Don't say anything about her clothes when she comes in.

RUTH
All right.

MRS. FENNER
Remember, now — I wouldn't please her. And get that watering-can, Ruth, and be watering those plants: let her see that *somebody's* doing something around here.

[*She peers keenly out between the shade and the window jamb, then steps across again to the window at the back and peers. Then she suddenly hurries across and out through the door at the right. There is a pause; the doorbell rings and the street door is opened; and Olly comes in, in black, with a heavy mourning veil. She comes down to the center table and puts down her bag. Mrs. Fenner appears at the right door, polishing a small silver pitcher with a bit of chamois.*

OLLY
Hello, Laura.

MRS. FENNER (*very coldly*)
Hello.

OLLY
I thought maybe you'd be over here to-day.

MRS. FENNER
I've *been* here since ten this morning.

OLLY (*putting back her veil, and moving around to sit down at the left of the table*)
Ruth with you?

MRS. FENNER
Yes, I told her to stop here on her way from the office.

She only has a half day on Saturdays. She's out there somewhere watering the plants.

OLLY (*removing her black kid gloves*)

I called your house around eleven, from the city, but I couldn't get any answer.

MRS. FENNER

I left there right after ten.

OLLY

And then I called here, but there was no answer.

MRS. FENNER

I must have been on the way over.

OLLY (*taking a heavily bordered mourning handkerchief from her bag*)

How did you get in? Did you have a key?

MRS. FENNER

No, this woman in the next house here had a key to the back door; Cliff left it with her.

OLLY

Does she know when they're coming home?

MRS. FENNER

She says this afternoon: that that's what Cliff told her when he was going away.

OLLY

You know I haven't had a solitary word from him.

MRS. FENNER

I haven't either.

OLLY

Not even a postal card from May, in all the four weeks she's been down there.

MRS. FENNER

Well, of course, I didn't *expect* to hear anything from

May, for she's never written a line to me in her life; but I made it my business to find out.

OLLY (*replacing the handkerchief*)

What did you do?

MRS. FENNER

I called this woman next door here, to see if she knew anything.

OLLY

I never thought of such a thing.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I certainly didn't think it 'ud look very nice to have Cliff walk into an empty house, with the two of us within a trolley ride of him.

OLLY (*getting up, unfastening her coat, and moving up to one of the chairs at the back*)

Then, why didn't he let us know something; we're not mind readers.

MRS. FENNER

He let you know as much as he let me know.

OLLY (*taking off her coat*)

Well, I'm here, aren't I, and that's all you are, Laura. [*She puts the coat on the chair and then removes her hat.*

MRS. FENNER

I know, Olly, but I've *been* here since ten o'clock this morning; and going every minute of the time since. And I don't think it would have hurt you at all to come over here to-day and give a hand.

OLLY (*putting her hat with the coat*)

It *wouldn't* have hurt me at all; and I should have come over very willingly if I'd known they were coming home to-day.

MRS. FENNER

You knew as much about it as I did.

OLLY (*coming forward to the table again*)

Well, I wouldn't preen myself so much on it, Laura, if I were you.

MRS. FENNER

I'm not preening myself on it at all.

OLLY

You know it's very lately that you've become so industrious around this house.

[*She turns and moves to the window at the left.*

MRS. FENNER

I've always been as industrious as you've been, I think.

OLLY

You know how industrious you've been, Laura. (*Turning to Laura*) But, don't be alarmed, — I won't take any of the credit for your work when Cliff comes.

MRS. FENNER

Oh, I knew you'd turn it that way.

OLLY

That's what's the matter with you, Laura, I know all your tricks. You wanted Cliff to come in here and find you overpowered with work, so that he'd realize what a good sister he had; and you're furious that he should find me here too.

MRS. FENNER

I'm furious that you should fix it so that you'd just get here when everything was done.

OLLY

You're furious that I got here at all. (*She moves forward at the left*) For if you were so very anxious to have me here, you could have called me up.

MRS. FENNER

A lot of good that would have done me; you've never been in once yet to my knowledge when I *have* called.

OLLY

Well, if I haven't been in I've been out. I knew the minute ever you'd see this new suit and hat on me you'd start *something*. (*Mrs. Fenner laughs, lightly, with pained amusement*) You can laugh all you like, but that's what's the matter with you — I saw it in your face the minute you came into the room.

MRS. FENNER

I didn't know your suit and hat *were* new.

OLLY (*coming back to the table again for her handkerchief*)

Don't tell lies, dear.

MRS. FENNER

How should I know?

OLLY

You knew, all right.

MRS. FENNER

I haven't seen you since the funeral.

OLLY

You know it if I get a new handkerchief; and it's like a red rag to you.

MRS. FENNER (*amused, and moving up to look out the window at the back*)

You get so many new things I can't keep track of them.

OLLY

Well, if I do they're paid for. And I wouldn't get them if I didn't need them.

MRS. FENNER (*speaking directly to her*)

I don't know why you needed another black suit when you got one only a month ago for the funeral.

OLLY

That coat is too short. It makes me look too squat. It has absolutely no line from the shoulder to the hip; and I'm too dumpy. That is the one line I must have; and if I don't have it, I might just as well be sitting down.

[*Ruth comes in at the street door.*

RUTH

Aunt Olly!

OLLY

Hello, Ruth darling.

RUTH (*coming to her*)

When did you get here?

OLLY

A minute or two ago.

[*Ruth kisses her.*

RUTH

I haven't seen you since the funeral.

OLLY

How have you been, dear?

RUTH (*rubbing her fingers with her handkerchief, and crossing over and down to the mirror, which is supposed to be on the fourth wall at the right*)

I've been fine, Aunt Olly, thanks, — how have you been?

OLLY (*resuming the chair at the left of the table*)

Oh, just so-so, dear.

MRS. FENNER

Did you leave everything all right out there, Ruth?

RUTH

Yes, I put the things back in the little shed.

OLLY

I think you're a little thinner, Ruth.

RUTH (*turning from the mirror and crossing to the chair at right of the table to sit down*)

Oh, no such luck, Aunt Olly, I'm getting stouter by the minute.

OLLY

You look thinner to me, dear.

[*Mrs. Fenner takes advantage of the situation to look closely at Olly's new hat and coat.*

RUTH

Well, it must be the black, for I weigh a hundred and twenty-two pounds.

OLLY

Do you really weigh that much, Ruth?

RUTH

A hundred and twenty-two pounds; I was weighed two weeks ago.

MRS. FENNER

You must have lost a few of those pounds to-day, didn't you, Ruth?

RUTH

I hope so. (*To Olly*) Isn't that terrible.

OLLY

Why, that's three pounds more than I weigh, dear.

RUTH

Do you only weigh a hundred and nineteen pounds, Aunt Olly?

OLLY

That's what I weighed the last time I was weighed.

MRS. FENNER (*moving over and down to the right*)

Well, it must have been a long time ago, Olly.

OLLY

It couldn't have been such a *very* long time ago, Laura,

for it was down at Doctor DeShanty's, and I've only been going to him since November.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I don't think you could have had both feet on the scales, (*Ruth laughs*) if you only weighed a hundred and nineteen pounds.

OLLY

Oh, I'm always a great joke for you, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

No, but I certainly think you ought to have sense enough, Olly, to know that you weigh more than a hundred and nineteen pounds.

OLLY

I have no idea *what* I weigh. I'm not one of those people that's everlastingly jumping on and off scales. I'm simply telling you what the doctor told me.

MRS. FENNER (*moving towards Ruth*)

Ruth, you'd better go out and make that dressing.

RUTH

There's plenty of time.

MRS. FENNER AND OLLY (*speaking together*)

MRS. FENNER: You don't know how much time there is; they're apt to walk in here any minute.

OLLY: But you'd try to make a joke out of it if I said I weighed a thousand pounds.

[*She reaches for her handkerchief.*]

RUTH (*getting up, reluctantly, and crossing in front of her mother towards the right door*)

It won't take a minute.

MRS. FENNER (*following her*)

Well, it won't hurt to have it made.

MRS. FENNER AND OLLY (*speaking together*)

MRS. FENNER: And take these things out with you, Ruth.

[*Ruth takes the chamois and the silver pitcher and goes out.*

OLLY: And I don't think it's very nice to be constantly making fun of me in front of your daughter.

[*She touches her eyes.*

MRS. FENNER

And don't touch that oven door; leave it just the way I left it. (*Turning and coming back to the small lady's chair, which is about halfway over to the table*) There wasn't a bite to eat in this house when I got over here. (*She sits down*) I had to send her down to this store at the corner for a whole load of stuff. I don't know what Cliff will do for something to eat when he gets in: unless they stop and get something in town.

OLLY

They might wait and have their dinner in Atlantic City.

MRS. FENNER

They might, — I don't know what they'll do. (*Olly reaches down and unfastens the strap of her left slipper*) But he has the car with him, and I don't imagine he'd want —

OLLY

Oh, did he drive down?

MRS. FENNER

So this woman next door says. She says he went away in the car. And I don't imagine he'd want to be driving up through Jersey in the dark; it's bad enough in the daylight.

OLLY

My left foot has been bothering me terribly for the last

few weeks, I don't know what's the matter with it. Right across the instep. Do you ever have that?

MRS. FENNER

Not across the instep I don't; but my heels bother me a lot if I stand too long.

OLLY

Well, I don't know what I'm going to do about this left foot of mine; it has me positively crippled. And I think I must have walked a thousand miles to-day if I walked an inch.

MRS. FENNER

Have you been in town?

OLLY

Yes, I had to see about getting something for the Bridge Club next Thursday; it's my turn to give the prize. Of course, I can't go, but I have to give something. And I might just as well have stayed at home, for I didn't see a solitary thing — except a couple of novelty bureau dolls, in a gift shop there in Sugden's Row. But they had absolutely no expression; and I can not bear a doll that has no expression. But I have walked and walked and walked till I positively thought I should sink to the pavement. I was simply exhausted by the time I got to the doctor's.

MRS. FENNER

Are you still going to the doctor's?

OLLY

Yes, I have to go to him. And I'll *be* going to him for the next six months, from the way he talks.

MRS. FENNER

What are you going to him now for?

OLLY

The same thing — that that I told you about.

MRS. FENNER

Is he doing you any good?

OLLY

He *says* I'm very much better, — but I still have those shooting pains. And he says it's a wonder I'm here at all, the way my eyes are. The first day I went into him, the minute he looked at me, he said, "My, my, my, what *have* you been doing to your eyes, Mrs. Kipax!" "Why," I said, "nothing, particularly, Doctor, that I know of; why?" "Oh," he said, "you've been doing something, Mrs. Kipax"; he said, "I don't think I have ever looked into such tired eyes." So he sent me right over to Doctor Entwistle to have my glasses changed. And I think it's helped my neuralgia a lot. I was telling him about May to-day, too; he said he'd like to see her sometime when she gets back.

MRS. FENNER

I imagine she must be better, or we'd have heard something.

OLLY

What do you think Cliff'll do here, Laura, — about this house, I mean?

MRS. FENNER

I don't know any more about what he'll do than you do, Olly.

OLLY

I think he should break up.

MRS. FENNER

Cliff'll never do that, Olly.

OLLY
He might have to do it.

MRS. FENNER
He's too fond of his own home.

OLLY
Well, he can't very well have a home, Laura, if there isn't some woman here to run it.

MRS. FENNER
He'll find some one.

OLLY
I wish him luck; I've been trying for nearly a year to find some one, but you might just as well look for gold dollars

MRS. FENNER (*becoming very positive*)
You know, if May were any good *she'd* turn in here and keep house for Cliff.

OLLY
May couldn't keep house, Laura.

MRS. FENNER
She could learn; she's not a child. (*Olly makes a move*) If she were married she'd have to do it.

OLLY
Cliff wouldn't want her to do it.

MRS. FENNER
That's the whole trouble; he's spoiled her. And every one of them has spoiled her from her grandmother down. They've made her think she was too good to do anything but sit in the parlor here and play the piano. And I've never heard her play anything yet that I knew what she was playing.

OLLY
Lydy didn't want her to do housework.

MRS. FENNER

I know she didn't; I've heard her say so.

OLLY

She wouldn't let her wet her finger.

MRS. FENNER

Well, it might be better for her now if she'd *let* her do something once in a while. But, Cliff has spoiled her as much as her mother ever did. And I guess now that she's through that school she's been going to, the next we know he'll be sending her to college.

OLLY

He'll send her if she wants to go, I guess.

MRS. FENNER

And you may be sure she'll want to go, too. She has no more idea what things cost than her mother had.

OLLY

Well, if he wants to spend his money that way, Laura, we can't stop him.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I don't think it's fair, Olly. (*Olly makes a gesture of conditional surrender*) I know I'd hate like fury to ask him to send *my* daughter to college; and she's his niece as well as May.

OLLY (*powdering her nose*)

Well, it isn't exactly the same thing, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Why isn't it?

OLLY

Why, May has no father, dear, and Ruth has.

MRS. FENNER

It'd be all the same if she did have.

OLLY

Well, somebody's had to look out for her, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

I'm not talking about him looking out for her; he's always done that. But I certainly don't think it's right for him to be squandering his money on her the way he does. It isn't fair to himself.

OLLY (*rising*)

Well, maybe he might as well be squandering it on her, Laura, as saving it for somebody else.

MRS. FENNER

He might need some of what he's squandering later on.

[*She rises and moves towards the right door, and Olly limps to the back of the table to gather up her things.*

OLLY

But, I certainly think he's foolish if he keeps this big house up for just the two of them.

MRS. FENNER (*stopping, and turning*)

He might as well be here as somewhere else.

OLLY

There have been two women here in the last month, and you see how long they stayed. And when they won't stay in a nice house like this, where there are only two people to do for, and no children to upset anything, I don't think the chances look very good.

[*She limps up to the chair at the back to settle her hat and coat more carefully.*

MRS. FENNER (*turning to the door again*)

Some one'll come along.

OLLY

I hope so.

MRS. FENNER (*stopping at the door*)
Are you going to stay for dinner?

OLLY
I might as well, as long as they're coming. Ralph's away, you know.

MRS. FENNER
Where is he?

OLLY
He's in some kind of a tournament up at Spring Valley — he left yesterday afternoon.

MRS. FENNER
When is he coming back?

OLLY
To-morrow night, I guess, or Monday morning.

MRS. FENNER
And does he stay away from his work just to play golf?

OLLY (*moving towards the stairs*)
He doesn't usually; but this is some kind of a special thing I believe.

[*Mrs. Fenner smiles ruefully and shakes her head, crossing to the middle of the room and up to the window at the back.*

MRS. FENNER
He's lucky.

OLLY
I wonder if there's some kind of an old slipper upstairs that I could put on; my left instep is just about killing me.

MRS. FENNER
There must be something around up there, — look in one of the closets.

OLLY
I think I've been dancing too much lately.

MRS. FENNER (*over her shoulder*)

Maybe that's what's pulled you down to a hundred and nineteen pounds.

[*Olly looks back at her.*

OLLY

Maybe it is, Laura; (*Mrs. Fenner gives a hard little laugh*) but I'm not spiteful enough to stay thin without some exercise.

[*She goes up the stairs. Mrs. Fenner moves to the foot of the stairs and looks up after her, and listens. Then she steps down to the door at the right.*

MRS. FENNER (*in a subdued tone*)

Ruth!

RUTH (*from the kitchen*)

Yes?

MRS. FENNER

Come here for a minute.

[*She crosses up to the chair at the back again and picks up Olly's coat, knocking the hat and veil on to the floor.*

RUTH (*entering*)

What do you want, Mama?

MRS. FENNER (*coming towards Ruth*)

She's gone upstairs to look for some slippers, — you'd better go up and see what she's doing.

RUTH (*going to the stairs*)

Is she going to stay for dinner?

MRS. FENNER

You may be sure she is.

RUTH

Do you want me to take that coat up?

MRS. FENNER

No, I want to try it on, — so keep her up there for a

minute. (*Ruth goes on up the stairs, and Mrs. Fenner puts Olly's coat on and looks at it critically from various angles in the mirror, forward. There is a movement at the front door. She turns and steps quickly to the window at the back and glances out, toward the left, then goes quickly to the door and opens it wide*) We're here ahead of you!

CLIFF

Oh, you're in there!

MRS. FENNER

We're robbing the house.

[*She laughs.*

CLIFF (*laughing a little*)

That's fine; I was just looking for my key.

[*He picks up two suit cases and comes in.*

MRS. FENNER (*going out and picking up a lady's hatbox and another suit case*)

Where's the rest of the party?

CLIFF

They'll be right along.

MRS. FENNER

I got a key from the woman next door.

CLIFF (*setting the suit cases down to the right of the windows at the back*)

Oh, yes?

MRS. FENNER

I called her up yesterday to see if she knew anything about when you were coming home.

CLIFF (*going to door again*)

I'll take them, Laura.

[*He takes them and sets them down with the others, and Mrs. Fenner turns to close the door.*

MRS. FENNER
How is May, any better?

CLIFF (*taking off his Panama hat and bringing it down to the table*)
Yes, she's a thousand per cent better; I hardly knew her.

MRS. FENNER
Did she come up with you?

CLIFF (*taking a cigar from his pocket*)
Yes, I just let them out down at the corner here to get some things for dinner.

MRS. FENNER (*coming forward at the right of the table*)
The dinner's all ready.

CLIFF
Is that so?

MRS. FENNER
Yes, Ruth and I got it.

CLIFF
Well, that's fine.

MRS. FENNER
We've been here since ten o'clock this morning.

CLIFF
I was going to wait and have dinner in Atlantic, but on account of having the car with me, I thought it best to get here before dark.

MRS. FENNER
Yes, I thought that's what you'd do, when the woman told me you had the car with you.

CLIFF
Is Ruth still here?

MRS. FENNER (*going towards the stairs*)
Yes, she's upstairs fixing herself a bit; I'll call her. I've

kept her at it pretty steadily here to-day. Ruth! (*Turning to Cliff*) Olly's here, too.

CLIFF (*lighting his cigar*)

Oh, is she?

MRS. FENNER

Yes, she just happened to stop in a few minutes ago on her way home from town. (*Calling up the stairs*) Ruth!

RUTH

Yes?

MRS. FENNER

Your Uncle Cliff is here.

RUTH

Oh, is he!

MRS. FENNER (*moving forward at the right, laughing*)

Hurry down.

CLIFF

You never saw such a change in anybody as there is in May.

MRS. FENNER

Well, that's fine: I'm glad she went.

CLIFF

It's a relief to *my* mind, I don't mind telling you. I don't think I ever saw her look so well.

MRS. FENNER

It's too bad she didn't know we were here; she wouldn't have had to bother stopping to get anything; Ruth got everything this morning.

CLIFF

Well, they were only going to get a few things. I never gave it a thought about there not being anybody here, to tell you the truth; and I don't think May did either.

It was Miss Plunkett that suggested it. She said if there was nothing in the house they'd better stop and get something.

MRS. FENNER

Who's Miss Plunkett, Cliff?

CLIFF

She's a woman that May got acquainted with at the hotel down there. A good-natured kind of a woman. She certainly has cheered May up a lot. We brought her up with us.

MRS. FENNER

Does she live around here?

CLIFF

No, she lives in Harrisburg; but nothing 'ud do May but she'd stop here for a few days on her way home. (*Going up towards the suit cases*) Two of these suit cases belong to her. I'll have to wait till they get here to see where May wants to put her. (*Ruth comes running down the stairs*) There we are!

RUTH (*crossing to him*)

Hello, Uncle Cliff.

CLIFF

All dressed up in our working clothes.

RUTH (*shaking hands with him*)

How are you?

CLIFF AND OLLY (*speaking together*)

CLIFF: I'm fine, Ruth, how are you?

[*Ruth turns to her mother.*

OLLY: (*coming down the stairs*) Don't look at me, Cliff, I'm a holy show!

CLIFF

Hello, Olly, how are you?

RUTH (*to her mother*)

Where's May?

(*Her mother whispers something to her, and then tells her to go out into the kitchen and take off her apron. Ruth passes above her mother towards the door at the right. As she reaches the door she glances back at the coat which her mother is still wearing. She steps back and touches her mother on the arm, to inquire the meaning of it. Her mother glances at it, and then smiles and says something about having tried it on and forgotten to take it off. She promptly starts to remove it, and Ruth goes on out — into the kitchen*)

OLLY (*crossing to him, wearing a man's moccasin on her left foot*)

My dear, I'm a crippled woman.

CLIFF

What's the matter with you?

OLLY (*shaking hands*)

And how is my handsome brother?

CLIFF

Fine. Where did you get the slipper?

OLLY (*laughing*)

Isn't this terrible!

MRS. FENNER

It looks like a snowshoe.

[*Olly is convulsed.*

OLLY

I can go skiing in this.

CLIFF

That must be mine, isn't it?

OLLY

It must be, but it's the only thing I could find up there.

MRS. FENNER
Did you look in May's room?

OLLY
Yes, but I imagine she must have all her slippers with her. Where is she, Cliff?

CLIFF (*turning to the door*)
She stopped for some things at the corner: she ought to be right along any minute.
[*He goes out, closing the door behind him.*

OLLY (*taking a step or two after him*)
What did she stop at the corner for?

MRS. FENNER (*crossing hurriedly up to the windows at the back, and thrusting the coat towards Olly*)
You'd better put this upstairs.

OLLY (*turning to her, a bit bewildered*)
What's the matter?

MRS. FENNER
Never mind now, get it out of sight. (*Olly takes the coat*)
And put your shoe on, there's company coming.
[*Mrs. Fenner peers out the window, toward the left.*

OLLY (*hobbling towards the stairs*)
Who is it?

MRS. FENNER
God knows: somebody that May's dragging back with her.

OLLY (*hurrying back to the chair*)
Where's my hat?

MRS. FENNER
Isn't it where you left it?
[*There is a sound of laughter out at the left.*

OLLY (*picking up her hat*)
I didn't leave it on the floor.

MRS. FENNER
It must have fallen down.
CLIFF (*out at the left*)
I think I should have waited with the car for you.
OLLY (*hurrying to the stairs and up*)
I suppose you've been trying that on, too, haven't you?
MISS PLUNKETT (*out at the left*)
That's just what I was saying to May; we look like Maggie Bundles.
[*Mrs. Fenner hurries out at the right door.*
CLIFF (*swinging the door open and coming in*)
What have you been doing, buying the store out?
[*May enters, laughing, carrying a couple of parcels.*
MAY
You owe us two dollars and thirty-eight cents, Uncle Cliff.
[*She comes down to the table with parcels.*
CLIFF (*holding the door open*)
Got you here at last, Miss Plunkett.
MISS PLUNKETT (*entering, carrying several parcels*)
We bought enough food, Cliff, for an entire week.
[*She comes down to the table with parcels.*
CLIFF (*closing the door*)
Who paid for it?
MAY
Why, I paid for it, of course.
MISS PLUNKETT
May paid for it.
MAY
She wanted to, but I wouldn't let her. Give them to me, dear.

CLIFF (*crossing at the back towards the right door*)
You needn't have stopped at all; your Aunt Laura and Ruth are here, and they have the dinner all ready.

MAY
Take these things out, will you, Uncle Cliff?

CLIFF (*coming back*)
Sure.

MISS PLUNKETT
Tell them to put that butter on the ice, Cliff; and those lamb chops, too.

CLIFF
Which are they?

MISS PLUNKETT
They'll see when they open them.

MAY (*going towards the chair at the back, removing her things*)
Take off your things, Daisy.

CLIFF (*turning at the door*)
Your Aunt Olly's here too, May.

MAY
How did they all get in?

CLIFF
Laura got the key that I left with Mrs. Young; and Olly just happened to drop in. I'll take those suit cases up in a minute. (*Going out the door*) Where are you, Laura! — The gang's all here.

MAY
We won't have to get dinner now, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT
That's grand.

MAY
I guess it's just as well, the kind of a cook *I* am.

MISS PLUNKETT (*coming forward a little*)
Say, I love this room, May.

MAY
This house is nearly a hundred years old.

MISS PLUNKETT
I love an old-fashioned house.

MAY
Nearly every room upstairs is as big as this.

MISS PLUNKETT (*stepping to the table for her purse*)
Say, listen, dear, before I forget it, — I owe you a dollar for those salt-water taffies.

MAY
I'll give you them for a present.

MISS PLUNKETT
You won't do anything of the kind, now; — here, you take this.

[*She gives her a dollar bill.*

MAY
Thanks.

[*She takes it and goes to the back to put it in her coat pocket.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*taking her handkerchief from her purse*)
I bought them for myself and they're not going to be even opened.

[*May laughs.*

MAY
I'm sure I must owe you something, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT
You don't owe me a thing, darling.

MAY
Sit down for a minute, dear.

MISS PLUNKETT (*stepping to the upper window at the left*)
I'm not a bit tired, really, are you?

MAY (*moving down to the middle of the room*)
Not very.

MISS PLUNKETT (*stepping to the lower window and raising the shade*)
I want to see what's outside here.

MAY (*abstractedly*)
There's nothing but trees out there.

MISS PLUNKETT
I adore trees. Oh, aren't they lovely! (*May stands looking rather wistfully toward the right door. Miss Plunkett turns from the window and crosses below the table towards her*) Did you ever read anything about trees, May? (*May doesn't answer her*) What's the matter, dear? — What are you thinking about?

MAY
I was just thinking how funny it is not to see Mama here.

MISS PLUNKETT (*putting her arm around May's shoulder*)
Well, now, you mustn't think about that, darling, — you'll get used to it. I was younger than you when it happened to me; and I had to turn in and keep house for my father and the rest of them.

MAY
I don't think I'd know how to keep house, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT
Well, just watch me, dear, for the next week or so; I love to keep house. We'll have a grand time. (*She laughs and May tries to reflect it*) Say, listen, dear — is this the Aunt Laura that you were telling me about, — that you don't like?

MAY
Yes. She doesn't like me, either. She only came over here to-day for fear she'd miss something.

MISS PLUNKETT
Ruth's her daughter, isn't she?

MAY
Yes, and she's as stingy as she can be.

MISS PLUNKETT
Well, the one *I* want to see is your Aunt Olly.
[*They both laugh, and Miss Plunkett turns and goes towards the windows at the back.*

MAY (*following her, with a glance toward the right door and the stairs*)
You'll see her.

MISS PLUNKETT
I'm dying to get a peek at Olly.

MAY
Don't get her telling you about her ailments —

MISS PLUNKETT (*raising the shades in the right alcove window*)
Not a chance, darling, not to me.

MAY
She has everything that was ever heard of.

MISS PLUNKETT
She won't tell it to me; I have to listen to enough of that in Harrisburg.

MAY
And I don't think there's a thing the matter with her.

MISS PLUNKETT (*coming briskly out of the right alcove and into the left one to raise the shades*)
Of course there isn't.

MAY
For she's everlastingly on the go.

MISS PLUNKETT
Hasn't she any children?

MAY
No.
MISS PLUNKETT
Don't you think we ought to put these shades up, dear?
MAY
Yes, put them up.
MISS PLUNKETT
Let in some of that grand sunlight.
RUTH (*entering from the right*)
Hello, May.
[*She crosses towards her.*
MAY (*giving her her hand*)
Oh, hello, Ruth.
RUTH
Glad to see you back again.
MAY
Thanks.
RUTH
Are you feeling better?
MAY
Yes, I feel ever so much better, thank you.
RUTH
Mama'll be right in; we were getting the dinner out there.
MAY
Isn't that nice of you? Miss Plunkett and I were all ready to get our own. (*They laugh*) This is Miss Plunkett, Ruth.
RUTH (*crossing to Miss Plunkett, in front of May*)
How do you do?
MISS PLUNKETT (*shaking hands*)
Hello, darling.

MAY
My cousin, Miss Fenner.

RUTH
Did you have a nice ride up?

MISS PLUNKETT
Too long for me.

MAY
Miss Plunkett doesn't like automobiles.

RUTH
You don't?

MISS PLUNKETT
I can't see sitting still for three hours at a stretch.

RUTH
Oh, I could spend the rest of my life in an automobile.

MISS PLUNKETT
I'd rather be walking.

MAY
Did it take us three hours, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT
Just about; we left there around three.

CLIFF (*entering from the right*)
How do you think the patient looks, Ruth?

[*He continues across to the lower window at the left and flicks his cigar ashes out.*

RUTH
Why, I think she looks wonderful.

CLIFF
You'd think so if you'd seen her when I left her down there.

[*Olly appears on the stairs, with her hat on.*

MAY (*crossing to her*)
Hello, Aunt Olly.

OLLY (*standing on the bottom step*)
Have the dead arisen?
[*May laughs and goes towards her.*
CLIFF
What do you think of her now?
OLLY
Come here till I see you, dear.
CLIFF
I think we can thank you for a lot of this, Miss Plunkett.
MISS PLUNKETT
We had a lot of fun.
[*She whispers something to Cliff and they both laugh convulsively.*
OLLY
Why, my dear, you're transformed; — I'd hardly know you.
MAY
I feel fine.
OLLY
But, you know, I think you're a wretch, and I think your Uncle Cliff is a brute; —
[*Cliff stops laughing abruptly, and Daisy turns back towards the others.*
CLIFF
What!
OLLY
For we haven't had even a card from either of you.
CLIFF
She's been having too good a time I guess.
MAY (*turning towards Miss Plunkett*)
This is my friend, Miss Plunkett, Aunt Olly.

OLLY (*stepping down and crossing to Miss Plunkett*)
Oh, I'm so delighted to meet you, Miss Plunkett.
[*May moves over after her, slowly, and Ruth, passing above May, whispers something to her and then continues down to the right.*

MISS PLUNKETT
How do you do?

CLIFF
Miss Plunkett's the lady that's been looking after May down there.

OLLY
Well, I'm sure you must have some miraculous power, Miss Plunkett, for I'd hardly know her.

MISS PLUNKETT
I think it was the air down there.

OLLY
Oh, it must have been something more than that; for I've been to Atlantic City any number of times for poor health; (*May glances at Ruth*) and it's never done me a bit of good.

CLIFF
I think May must have laughed herself well.
[*They all laugh.*

MAY
We did plenty of that.

OLLY
But, they say laughing makes you thin.

RUTH
I've always heard it makes you fat, Aunt Olly.

OLLY
So have I; but they say now it makes you thin. I saw

it in a magazine the other day. So a person doesn't know what to do, does he?

[*They laugh again.*

CLIFF

Have to start crying for a change, Olly.

OLLY (*raising her hand*)

No, I've had more than my share of that, and it doesn't help at all. But, it was the funniest thing, Miss Plunkett, — when I was a young girl I was terribly thin. Oh, painfully so. Seems rather incredible now, I suppose, but I was — a perfect rail. And somebody told me, or I read somewhere, that if you laughed you'd grow fat: so I promptly started to laugh — on the slightest provocation. If a person only looked at me, I burst out laughing. (*They all laugh*) It does seem perfectly assinine when I think of it now —

CLIFF

You must have been something like Alice Ben Bolt.

OLLY

No, Alice used to weep if anybody looked at her.

MISS PLUNKETT

I always thought there was something wrong with her.

[*Cliff laughs.*

OLLY

I think so, too, Miss Plunkett.

MISS PLUNKETT

Don't you think so, Cliff? (*He shakes his head, unable to speak for laughing*) The idea of any sane-minded woman bustin' out crying if anybody smiled at her.

[*May and Ruth laugh.*

CLIFF

Maybe she was trying to get fat or thin or something.

MISS PLUNKETT
She was trying to get something.
CLIFF
I read a funny article in one of the magazines a while back, and the writer said that Alice Ben Bolt must have been the village idiot.
[*Miss Plunkett collapses.*
OLLY
Oh, Cliff, that's terrible!
MISS PLUNKETT
He had it about right.
OLLY
Isn't he dreadful, Miss Plunkett, to talk that way about a classic.
[*Mrs. Fenner enters at the right, without her apron.*
MRS. FENNER
Hello, May, how are you feeling?
MAY
Hello, Aunt Laura.
[*They shake hands.*
MRS. FENNER
You look fine.
MAY
Yes, I feel much better.
CLIFF
Don't you think she looks well, Laura?
MRS. FENNER
Yes, she looks fine.
CLIFF
This is Miss Plunkett, Laura.
MRS. FENNER (*bowing coldly*)
How do you do?

MISS PLUNKETT
How do you do?

CLIFF
The lady that May's been going around with at the shore.

MRS. FENNER
I suppose I'm a sight, Miss Plunkett, but we've been going like the Gold Dust Twins here all day.

CLIFF
We thought we'd all have to pitch in and get our own dinner.

MRS. FENNER
No, Ruth and I tended to that.

CLIFF
Well, that's fine. How soon will dinner be ready, Laura?

MRS. FENNER
In about ten minutes; I just have to wait for a couple of things.

CLIFF (*crossing below the table and up towards the suit cases*)
Well, then suppose I take these things upstairs, May.

MAY
All right, Uncle Cliff, if you will.

[*She crosses to the chair for her coat and hat, and Mrs. Fenner turns and whispers a direction to Ruth. Miss Plunkett moves up to the chair for her hat and coat, and Olly wanders towards the left, above the table.*

CLIFF
Have you decided where you want to put Miss Plunkett?

MAY
In the front room.

CLIFF
These two?

MISS PLUNKETT
No, that one and the black one, Cliff.
[*Mrs. Fenner looks at Olly.*
CLIFF
I see.
MISS PLUNKETT
I suppose they weigh a ton, don't they, Cliff?
MAY (*crossing below Cliff, towards the stairs, carrying her coat and both hats and her pocketbook*)
I have your hat, Daisy.
MISS PLUNKETT
All right, Doll.
[*Olly hands Miss Plunkett her bag from the table.*
CLIFF
No, they're not so bad.
MISS PLUNKETT
Thanks. I've got everything in them but the bird cage.
OLLY
A person needs a lot of changes in Atlantic City.
MAY (*reaching for the hat box*)
I'll take this, Uncle Cliff.
CLIFF
No, I can take it.
MISS PLUNKETT
Here, give that to me; I haven't got a thing.
CLIFF
I can take it as easy as not.
MAY
Have you everything now, Uncle Cliff?
MISS PLUNKETT
Yes, of course, he has everything! Go on, show the man where to go.

[*She gives Cliff a little push, and they all move towards the stairs. Mrs. Fenner moves across below the lady's chair and up to the middle of the room, and Ruth moves up at the right.*

MAY (*still laughing*)

He knows where to go.

MISS PLUNKETT

You're as bad as the geese going to Scotland.

MAY

You have the check for my trunk, Uncle Cliff?

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning to Mrs. Fenner*)

That's a fine place to ask a man about a trunk check! (*Ruth, May, Cliff, and Olly all laugh*) When he's carrying forty suit cases!

[*Cliff sways, laughing, on the second step, and Miss Plunkett thrusts her arm forward to support him.*

MAY

I didn't ask him for it.

MISS PLUNKETT

Steady there, boy! Don't you fall back on me. There's an electric iron in that suit case. (*They go up the stairs, laughing*) That's the best one I've heard to-day — asking foolish questions when he's halfway up the stairs.

[*Ruth turns, laughing, to her mother, who indicates with a deft gesture that she go up after them. Ruth hurries up. The laughter fades at the head of the stairs; but Olly, standing in the middle of the room, continues to be amused, until Mrs. Fenner turns and looks at her stonily, — whereupon she subsides into a meek silence. Then, after another glance up the stairs, Mrs. Fenner moves closer to Olly and speaks in a low, indignant voice.*

MRS. FENNER
Who is this woman, Olly?

OLLY
How do I know who she is, Laura.

MRS. FENNER
Didn't you find out anything about her when you were doing all that laughing in here a minute ago?

OLLY
Only that her name was Plunkett.

MRS. FENNER
I know what her name is; I was introduced to her.
[*She turns away and moves a step or two nearer the stairs.*

OLLY
I think I heard May call her Daisy.

MRS. FENNER (*over her shoulder*)
That's a good name for her.

OLLY
She was evidently at the same hotel with them at the shore.

MRS. FENNER (*turning and starting across the room, above Olly, towards the left*)
I never heard such laughing in all my life; I could hear you away out in the kitchen.

OLLY
We were laughing about Alice Ben Bolt.
[*Mrs. Fenner stops abruptly near the left windows and looks at Olly.*

MRS. FENNER
Well, I never saw anything about Alice Ben Bolt to make people laugh the way you people were laughing. (*She goes to the lower window at the left and looks out*) And every window in the house wide open. I sincerely

hope none of the neighbors happened to be passing; — it certainly wouldn't have sounded very much like a house where there'd been a funeral only a month ago. [*She comes back again towards Olly.*

OLLY

Well, Cliff was laughing, Laura, as much as anybody else.

MRS. FENNER

Yes, and you were laughing as much as Cliff. (*She continues towards the stairs*) Miss Plunkett certainly must be a great joker to make you all laugh so; especially Cliff. I don't think I've ever heard him laugh that way before in my life.

OLLY

Well, she seems a very good-natured kind of person, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

I know all about what kind of a person she is, Olly, — you don't have to tell me one solitary thing about her; all I had to do was look at her. (*There is a general laugh from upstairs; and Olly wanders meekly over towards the table*) She's got them going again. (*Crossing closer to Olly*) And she's going to stay here for a while; you know that, don't you?

OLLY

How do you know she is?

MRS. FENNER

Cliff told me so. You saw him take her suit cases upstairs, didn't you?

OLLY

But I thought maybe she was just staying over night here, on her way home.

MRS. FENNER

That one has no more home, Olly, than a tomcat. (*She goes back a step or two towards the stairs*) Couldn't you tell that by looking at her.

OLLY

Well, they must have invited her here, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

May invited her; and that's enough for Cliff. And she probably fixed it so that they couldn't get out of inviting her. But even if they did, that's no excuse for her accepting it; women that have homes are not taking people up on every invitation that's made them. And what's she doing at Atlantic City at this time of year in the first place; it isn't vacation time; and she's certainly not sick.

OLLY

How long is she going to stay here?

MRS. FENNER

From now on, if she can manage it; remember what I'm telling you. (*Olly looks at her blankly*) You heard her call him Cliff, didn't you? — and she's known him about four days, for he only left here last Tuesday. That's the kind she is — doesn't lose any time. You know, the woods are full of women like her, Olly, — that hang around fashionable hotels, with their ear to the ground. And May has very likely been talking her head off to her down there about the way things are around here, and she's wise enough to see the way the land lays. She figures that there's a nice home on the verge of being broken up here, and she's decided to step in and stop it.

OLLY

I don't think Cliff'll ever marry anybody now, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

He wouldn't have to marry her at all, — she could marry him.

[*She turns back towards the stairs, and stands looking up.*

OLLY

But I don't think he has any such idea in his head, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Well, we've got to keep *her* from putting it there.

OLLY (*turning away, and wandering towards the chair at the right of the table*)

Well, I don't know how you're going to do it, dear.

MRS. FENNER

Well, it'll certainly never be done by standing around laughing at everything she says.

OLLY (*sitting down*)

I mean if Cliff wants to marry sometime, Laura, we certainly can't stop him.

MRS. FENNER

We can stop *her*.

OLLY

But, why should we, Laura?

MRS. FENNER

Because I don't think he should marry.

OLLY

Not if he wants to?

MRS. FENNER

Not at his age.

OLLY

Why, Cliff isn't old!

MRS. FENNER

He's old enough to have married long ago, if he intended to marry.

OLLY

But, how could he, Laura?

MRS. FENNER

Others have done it, haven't they?

OLLY

But a lot of them have walked away and left their mothers and widowed sisters to shift for themselves, too, Laura; don't forget that; and Cliff didn't. He stayed right here till the day Mother died; and then he had Lydy and May on his hands. And he's been very good to us, in the bargain. I know he has to me, — and I guess he's been just as good to you. (*Mrs. Fenner gives her a look and moves forward to the mirror, where she touches her hair*) So that I think that now that he's in a position to marry, if he wants to, — of course he probably hasn't any such idea in his head at all, but if he should have, — I think we're the last two in the world that should attempt to interfere with it.

MRS. FENNER (*turning to her*)

I wouldn't attempt to interfere with it, but I certainly wouldn't want it to be somebody from Harrisburg. (*She flounces around the lady's chair and up the middle of the room to the windows at the back*) Let it be somebody that people know something about.

[*She lowers the shades in the right alcove window.*

OLLY

Is that where she's from, Harrisburg?

MRS. FENNER (*coming out of the alcove, and after a glance toward the stairs*)

That's what she told them. But I guess she's from wherever the last place was that she was invited.

[*She goes into the left alcove.*

OLLY

I wonder what she does for a living.

MRS. FENNER (*coming out of the alcove, after having lowered the shades*)

Just what she's doing now; you can take my word for it. (*She crosses to lower the shades at the left*) For if she had any occupation she couldn't be gallivanting all over the country at this time of the year. (*There is a general laugh from upstairs. She turns and looks darkly in the direction of the stairway, moving back to the middle of the room*) I love this house; I've always loved it: and it would just about break my heart to see some strange woman come into it; especially one that wasn't worthy of it. (*Turning sharply to Olly*) That's the reason I let both those housekeepers that have been here see that I was up to their tricks. I'm just as positive as I am that I'm standing here that both of those women had made up their minds that they were going to marry Cliff; particularly that Polish one, with the good color. And this one upstairs has made up her mind to do the same thing.

OLLY

Now, you may be entirely mistaken, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Oh, don't be so soft, Olly; (*turning away, towards the stairs. There is a general laugh from upstairs*) you ought to know the way women figure as well as I do. (*Coming back a step or two towards Olly again*) Why do you suppose she came here at all, — when she knew

there wasn't even a woman here to make her a cup of tea? — for they stopped at the corner to buy some food on the way up. But she made up her mind she'd make her own tea; and his, too.

[*She comes forward to the mirror again.*

OLLY

Such an idea may never have entered the woman's head, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Well, we must see to it that it doesn't enter it.

OLLY (*rising*)

Well, we'd better not see too hard, Laura, for it might have just the opposite effect, — (*Laura looks at her*) and put the idea into her head.

[*She goes around to the back of the table to get her handkerchief from her bag.*

MRS. FENNER

We don't have to *do* anything at all: only don't let her think we're dying about having her here; and if she's as sharp as I think she is, she'll take the hint and go.

[*She turns slowly and looks up the stairs again.*

OLLY (*moving across towards the stairs*)

Are you watching your dinner?

MRS. FENNER (*moving to the right door*)

Yes, it's about ready. (*Turning again*) You're going to stay for dinner, aren't you?

OLLY

Yes, certainly.

MRS. FENNER

Well, what did you put your hat on again for?

OLLY (*amused, and touching her hat*)

I didn't know I had it on, to tell you the truth. (*She*

laughs and comes down to the mirror, removing her hat) I'm so used to putting my shoes and hat on together, I suppose I put it on from force of habit.

[*Mrs. Fenner glances at the stairs again, then speaks confidentially to Olly.*

MRS. FENNER

Did you notice the dress on May?

OLLY

Yes; she must have bought that at Atlantic City.

MRS. FENNER

It's a wonder she wouldn't have bought a black one.

OLLY

Well, I do think she's a bit young, Laura, for black.

MRS. FENNER

For her own mother?

OLLY

Well, she's only seventeen; and with the summer coming on.

MRS. FENNER

My daughter's in black, and she was only Lydy's niece.

OLLY

Well, I think she's too young for black.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I'll tell you what *I* think; that this one upstairs put her up to that. And she'll put her up to a whole lot more, Olly, unless one of *us* is here.

OLLY

How can one of us be here?

MRS. FENNER

Until Cliff gets some one, I mean.

OLLY

But, how can we, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Very easily, if we want to. (*She glances over her shoulder toward the stairs*) You said Ralph wouldn't be back until Monday, didn't you?

OLLY

Sunday night or Monday.

MRS. FENNER

Well, you can stay here till that, can't you? And by that time I can have things so arranged at home that I can come over.

OLLY

I'd have to go over to-night and get a few things.

MRS. FENNER

Well, you can do that; I can stay here till you get back.

OLLY

Do you think Cliff'll think it's funny?

MRS. FENNER

Why should he think it's funny? If this one weren't here at all, one of us would have to give a hand till he gets somebody. And with her here, there's all the more reason why one of us should stay.

OLLY

Well then, I'll have to go over to the house right after dinner.

MRS. FENNER

All right, I'll wait for you. (*She turns slowly to the stairs again and stands looking up and Olly hurries across to the table for her bag*) For I don't like the looks of things around here at all, Olly. (*She turns and motions Olly to her. Olly crosses*) Did you notice the way she pushed him that time when he had the suit cases in his hands?

OLLY

And he thought it was very funny, too.

MRS. FENNER

Well, didn't you hear the way he laughed.

OLLY

I guess the next we know she'll be throwing her arms around him.

MRS. FENNER

She will unless one of us is here. And Cliff would think that was funny, too.

OLLY

I'd like to hear him if I were to throw *my* arms around some man.

MRS. FENNER

Ho!

OLLY

That I'd known only four days.

MRS. FENNER

That'd be another story.

OLLY

I'll bet he wouldn't laugh.

MRS. FENNER (*laying her hand on Olly's arm*)

They're all alike, Olly.

[*She goes to the right door and on out.*

OLLY

Do you want me to tell them the dinner's ready when I go up?

MRS. FENNER (*from the right*)

You may as well; I'll have it up by the time they get down here. (*Olly starts for the stairs, limping. There is a step on the front porch. She stops, with her hand on the banister, and looks through the windows at the back of the*

room. There is a sharp ring at the front door. She steps briskly down to the mirror again, puts on her hat, and arranges her veil becomingly. The bell rings again) Are you there, Olly?

OLLY (*hurrying across to answer the door, putting her bag on the table*)

Yes, I'll go.

[*She opens the door, and a young man is standing there.*

SNYDER

Good evening, Mrs. Kipax.

OLLY

Oh, good evening, Mr. Snyder.

[*He walks in, coming forward at the right of the table, tossing his hat on to the table. He is smoking a cigarette.*

SNYDER

Did the folks get back?

OLLY (*closing the door*)

Yes, they got in about a half hour ago.

SNYDER

I thought I'd stop and say "Hello" on my way home.

OLLY (*crossing towards the stairs*)

You knew Ruth was here, of course.

SNYDER

Yes, she told me last night they were coming over.

OLLY

Sit down, Mr. Snyder, I'll call her; she's upstairs.

SNYDER (*sitting down*)

She said her mother said the folks were expected back to-day.

OLLY

Yes, they just got in. (*There is a scream of laughter*

from upstairs) Ruth! (*Something falls upstairs and there is another laugh from the three girls*) Ruth!

SNYDER (*taking a sporting sheet from his coat pocket*)

Seem to be having a good time up there.

OLLY (*coming back to the table for her bag*)

I'm afraid I'll have to go up, Mr. Snyder; I don't seem to be able to make them hear me.

SNYDER

Tell them to let us in on the joke.

OLLY (*starting for the stairs again*)

May's brought a visitor back with her from Atlantic City, and I've never heard such a giggler in all my life.

SNYDER

How *is* May?

OLLY (*stopping*)

Why, she's just ever so much better, Mr. Snyder, thanks —

SNYDER

That's good.

OLLY

I really hardly knew the child. I'll just take these things upstairs, Mr. Snyder, if you'll excuse me for a minute.

[*She crosses towards the stairs.*

SNYDER

That's all right, Mrs. Kipax.

OLLY

I'll send Ruth right down.

SNYDER

All right.

[*He opens up the newspaper.*

OLLY (*stopping near the stairs, turning, and laughing rather apologetically*)

I really haven't met with an accident, Mr. Snyder; (*he looks at her*) but I've been in the city all day to-day, shopping.

SNYDER

Oh, yes?

OLLY

And in new shoes.

SNYDER (*turning to the newspaper*)

Weeow!

OLLY

And you know what that does to you.

SNYDER

That's bad stuff.

OLLY

Although I suppose you men never go shopping, do you?

SNYDER (*looking at her*)

Once in a while.

OLLY

But, at least, you don't go in new shoes, I'm sure.

SNYDER (*resuming the newspaper again*)

I don't think I'd go far in them.

OLLY

I like to think that men don't do those foolish things, anyway. (*They both laugh, and Olly turns to go up the stairs. She misses the first step and utters a little exclamation. Snyder turns his head to see the cause of the outburst, and Olly looks at him roguishly*) Not this year. (*They both laugh and Olly goes on up the stairs*) I'll send Ruth right down, Mr. Snyder.

SNYDER
All right, Mrs. Kipax.
[*He gives an annoyed flip of the paper after her as though glad to be rid of her.*
MRS. FENNER (*in the right doorway*)
Hello, Charlie.
SNYDER (*rising slightly*)
Hello, Mrs. Fenner.
MRS. FENNER
Has Olly been talking you to death. (*They both laugh*) Was that you rang the bell?
SNYDER
Yes, Mrs. Kipax let me in.
MRS. FENNER
Does Ruth know you're here?
SNYDER
Mrs. Kipax has just gone up to tell her.
MRS. FENNER
She said she thought maybe you'd stop here this afternoon.
SNYDER
Yes, I told her last night I might. I was in to see a pool match at Morrison's.
MRS. FENNER
Have you had your dinner, Charlie?
SNYDER
No, I was just on my way over home now; but I thought I'd stop and say "Hello" to Mr. Mettinger.
MRS. FENNER AND RUTH (*speaking together*)
MRS. FENNER: They just got in awhile ago.
RUTH (*running down the stairs*): Leave it to you to drop in just at dinner hour.

SNYDER (*rising and moving to the middle of the room*)
Hello, Ruth.

MRS. FENNER AND RUTH (*speaking together*)
MRS. FENNER: Now, he didn't stop in for dinner at all.
RUTH: Where have you been all afternoon?

SNYDER
I went in to see that billiard match I was telling you about.

RUTH
Well, I thought you'd be here before this.

SNYDER
It wasn't over till after five.

RUTH
Well, you're going to stay here for dinner, aren't you?

SNYDER
I just stopped in to say "Hello" to your Uncle Cliff, if he was home.

MRS. FENNER
The dinner's all ready, Charlie; I just sent Olly to call them.

SNYDER
Well, I don't want to bother you.

MRS. FENNER
It's no bother at all.

RUTH
They won't be expecting you home, will they?

CLIFF (*coming down the stairs*)
Hello there, young fellow!
[*He crosses over in front of Ruth to shake hands with Snyder.*

SNYDER
Hello, Mr. Mettinger.

CLIFF

How is the world using you?

SNYDER

First rate, thanks.

CLIFF (*crossing to a point below the table*)

That's the stuff.

[*Snyder gives him a little slap on the back as he passes in front of him.*

SNYDER

Glad to see you back.

CLIFF (*putting some cigar ashes on the tray on the table*)

Everything all right down at the Allied Chemical?

SNYDER

Yes, pretty good, I guess.

CLIFF (*turning to Mrs. Fenner, who is standing over near the right door*)

Fine! — How about it, Laura? I heard a rumor upstairs that dinner was ready.

MRS. FENNER AND MISS PLUNKETT (*speaking together*)

MRS. FENNER: Yes, it's all ready, Cliff, I was just waiting for you all to come down.

MISS PLUNKETT (*at the head of the stairs, laughing*): Go ahead, dear, I want to get hold of this banister.

[*They all look toward the stairs, and Cliff goes up at the left of the table and crosses towards the stairs.*

CLIFF

Here they come now.

MISS PLUNKETT

Go on, now; let me alone!

CLIFF

What's happening to you up there?

MAY (*coming down the stairs, laughing*)
Daisy's afraid she's going to fall down the stairs.
[*They all laugh, and May crosses in front of Cliff to Snyder.*
CLIFF
Keep hold of the banister.
SNYDER
How do you do, Miss Phillips?
MAY
How do you do?
SNYDER
Feeling better?
MAY
Yes, much better, thanks.
[*Cliff takes Miss Plunkett's hand and helps her down the last three stairs.*
MISS PLUNKETT
I don't know how in the name of God you ever get up and down these stairs, Cliff, without getting killed.
[*They all laugh, and Miss Plunkett crosses below the lady's chair, Cliff following her. Ruth steps down to her mother's side and whispers something in her ear.*
CLIFF
I used to carry May up and down when she was sick.
[*He continues on over, below the table, to the left.*
MISS PLUNKETT (*going to a point between May and Snyder*)
Well, you won't carry me up and down, I'll tell you that, right now.
MAY
This is Mr. Snyder, Daisy.
MISS PLUNKETT
How do you do, Mr. Snyder?

MAY
Miss Plunkett.
SNYDER
How do you do?
[*They shake hands.*
MISS PLUNKETT
Is this your beau, May?
[*They all laugh.*
MAY
No, of course it isn't, Daisy!
MISS PLUNKETT
Oh, look at the way she's blushing! I'll bet it is.
MAY
It isn't, Daisy; I haven't any beau.
MISS PLUNKETT
Oh?
MRS. FENNER
That's what she tells us, Miss Plunkett.
MAY
Well, I haven't, Aunt Laura; you know that as well as I do.
MRS. FENNER
How should *I* know it, May?
MAY
Well, who is it, then?
MRS. FENNER
How should I know who it is, dear?
MAY
Of course you don't, because it isn't anybody.
MRS. FENNER
Every seventeen-year-old girl I ever knew, May, had her eye on somebody.

MAY

Well, I have my eye on several people, but they don't happen to be my beau.

[*There is a general laugh, and Snyder turns to the table to put some cigarette ashes on the tray.*

MISS PLUNKETT

I didn't know there was a fellow in the world till I was twenty-five, and after that they didn't know I was in the world. (*Snyder is very much amused. Miss Plunkett gives him a little poke in the ribs with her finger*) What are *you* laughing at?

CLIFF

Charlie is Ruth's beau.

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, that's grand! Just as long as he's somebody's beau — with all that grand curly hair. (*She flips her fingers towards Snyder's hair and he ducks down to the front of the table. They all laugh*) I'm sorry I can't get a better look at you, Charlie, but they keep it so darned dark in this room, with all these shades down.

CLIFF (*turning to the shades at the left*)

We'll put them up, and let you see him.

SNYDER

I guess I look better in the dark.

CLIFF AND MISS PLUNKETT (*speaking together*)

CLIFF: Put those shades up there, May.

[*May lifts the shades at the back.*

MISS PLUNKETT: I put them up myself a while ago, but somebody must have yanked them down again. (*Crossing to the lower window at the left*) Say, Cliff, there's the funniest old dodo watering this next lawn out here that I've ever seen in my life.

CLIFF (*coming down from the upper window at the left*)
Who's that, old Filoon?

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning to him sharply*)
Old what, Cliff?

CLIFF
Old Mr. Filoon.

MISS PLUNKETT
Now, listen, Cliff, don't tell me that that's anybody's name.

CLIFF
Yes, sure, that's his name.

MAY (*lifting the shades in the left alcove window at the back*)
Chauncey Filoon.

MISS PLUNKETT (*pronouncing the name Chauncey with mock elegance*)
Chauncey. (*She laughs, leaning back against the lower arm of the couch*) Oh, don't tell me any more or I'll have a stroke.

CLIFF
He waters that lawn twice a day sometimes.
[*Ruth crosses up to the right alcove window and looks toward the left.*

MISS PLUNKETT
I was whistling to him from the window of my room upstairs a while ago, (*Ruth turns and looks at her mother, who is over toward the right; and Snyder, who is standing below the table, facing the back of the room, turns and looks at Mrs. Fenner also*) and he didn't know where it was coming from. He kept tilting his head from side to side like an old canary. (*Cliff laughs, and Miss Plunkett kneels on the couch, leans out the window, and whistles twice. Ruth and her mother exchange looks. Suddenly*

Miss Plunkett hurries around Cliff and up to the door)
Oh, I must go out on the porch for a minute, I can't see him right from here.
[*Cliff follows her.*

MAY
Don't say anything to him, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT (*going out, and around to the left*)
I won't. I just want to get a peek at that Panama.
[*Snyder crosses to the lower window at the left, and Ruth crosses over and stands behind him. Mrs. Fenner steps up to the right alcove window and looks out.*

CLIFF
Keep away from the hedge, Miss Plunkett, he shoots that hose over here every once in a while.
[*May turns from the door and, with a look at Mrs. Fenner, goes into the left alcove window, where she stands looking out. Cliff comes in, laughing, and turns to the upper window at the left*

MRS. FENNER (*stepping to the middle of the room*)
Don't you go out there, May.

MAY
I'm not going out.

MRS. FENNER
He might think we're making fun of him.

MISS PLUNKETT (*out at the left*)
I suppose that lawn gives you plenty of work to do, doesn't it, Mr. Filoon?
[*Mrs. Fenner turns in a panic and rushes back to the right alcove window.*

FILOON (*calling back to Miss Plunkett*)
What say?

MISS PLUNKETT

I say, I suppose that lawn keeps you pretty busy tending to it, doesn't it?

[*Mrs. Fenner is desperate.*

FILOON

Yes, plenty of work, plenty of work; that's right.

MISS PLUNKETT

It looks very nice.

[*Olly comes down the stairs.*

FILOON

Keep a man goin' all day long.

[*Mrs. Fenner hears Olly and comes out of the window.*

MISS PLUNKETT

How often do you water it?

[*Mrs. Fenner indicates Miss Plunkett with an indignant gesture.*

FILOON

What say?

OLLY

What's the matter?

MISS PLUNKETT

I say, how often do you water it?

FILOON AND MRS. FENNER (*speaking together*)

FILOON: Twice every day, six months of the year.

MRS. FENNER: She's out there talking to old Filoon.

OLLY

My God, how did she get talking to *him?*

MISS PLUNKETT

Is that so?

MRS. FENNER AND FILOON (*speaking together*)

MRS. FENNER: She just went out there and started shouting across to him.

FILOON: Yes, Ma'm, twice every day rain or shine.

MISS PLUNKETT AND OLLY (*speaking together*)

MISS PLUNKETT: Do you water it on rainy days too?

OLLY: He'll be turning the hose on her in a minute, the way he did on me.

MRS. FENNER AND FILOON (*speaking together*)

MRS. FENNER: I wish he would; (*she steps forward to the table, glaring toward the left windows, and Olly scurries up to the right alcove window*) she might come in then, and not be making a show of herself.

FILOON: Rain's no good for it, does more harm than good.

MISS PLUNKETT

How is that, Mr. Filoon?

[*Olly rushes down to Mrs. Fenner's right.*

OLLY

It's a wonder Cliff wouldn't say something to her.

FILOON AND MRS. FENNER (*speaking together*)

FILOON: Brings out all the worms and bugs.

MRS. FENNER: Oh, *he* thinks it's very funny.

[*She goes up again to the right alcove window.*

MISS PLUNKETT

What do you do then; drown them all with the hose?

OLLY (*rushing up to the door, which is wide open*)

She acts to me like a crazy woman.

FILOON AND MRS. FENNER (*speaking together*)

FILOON: That's right, wash 'em all away.

[*Olly turns from the door and goes towards Mrs. Fenner.*

MRS. FENNER: (*meeting her halfway*) She was whistling at him a minute ago, out that window.

MISS PLUNKETT AND OLLY (*speaking together*)

MISS PLUNKETT: Well, you certainly have it in very nice condition.

OLLY: Why don't you call her in, Laura.

FILOON AND MISS PLUNKETT (*speaking together*)

FILOON: Pretty good, pretty good,—little early for it yet.

MISS PLUNKETT: I was just looking at it from the window upstairs.

MRS. FENNER

I'll tell her the dinner's ready.

[*She crosses, in front of Olly, and goes up to the door and out.*

FILOON

Do you live here, young woman?

OLLY (*to Ruth, who is looking at her*)

She'll have him in here in a minute.

[*She hurries up to the right alcove window again.*

MISS PLUNKETT

No, I live in Harrisburg.

MRS. FENNER

The dinner's ready, Miss Plunkett.

FILOON

Oh, is that so?

MRS. FENNER

Miss Plunkett,—

MISS PLUNKETT

Yes?

MRS. FENNER

The dinner's ready.

MISS PLUNKETT

All right, Laura, I'll be there in a minute. Yes, I'm just here on a visit.

[*Mrs. Fenner sails in and across towards the right door.*

MRS. FENNER

Come on, folks, the dinner's ready. Come on here, Ruth.

[*Ruth turns from the window and wanders across below the table towards the right; and Olly comes down out of the window to the middle of the room.*

FILOON

Haven't been in Harrisburg since 18 and 82.

MISS PLUNKETT

You'd see lots of changes, I suppose, if you went back there now.

FILOON

That's right, lots of changes — changes all the time.

MISS PLUNKETT

That's right. (*She comes running in, laughing, and down to the lower window at the left*) He's a nice old dodo, isn't he?

[*Snyder crosses to a point below the table.*

CLIFF (*closing the door*)

I think you made a hit with him, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, I think he's grand; I'm crazy about him. Did you see his hat, Olly?

OLLY

Yes, I've seen it many times, Miss Plunkett.

MISS PLUNKETT

It looks exactly like a rowboat turned upside down on his head.

OLLY

I've seen it.

[*Miss Plunkett looks out again and laughs.*

CLIFF
He's had that hat since I was a kid.

OLLY
You'd better not let him hear you laughing at him, Miss Plunkett; he's a very wicked old man.

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning to Olly*)
Oh, I think he's grand.

OLLY
I was talking to him out there one evening and he deliberately turned the hose on me. (*They all laugh, Miss Plunkett sinking on to the sofa*) Well, you needn't laugh, for he did.

CLIFF
I don't think he can see very well, Olly.

OLLY
Oh, he can see — a great deal more than he pretends.

MISS PLUNKETT
Maybe he was flirting with you, Olly.

OLLY
Well, if he was, he was wasting his time; for I don't like old men. And I told him so at the time, too.

MRS. FENNER (*appearing in the right door*)
This dinner'll be cold unless some of you come in here and eat it.
[*She sails across, below the lady's chair, towards the left.*

CLIFF (*starting across*)
Coming right along, Laura.

MRS. FENNER
Come on here, Ruth — what are you waiting for?
[*Ruth passes below her mother, towards the right door.*

CLIFF (*turning, just beyond the middle of the room, and offering Miss Plunkett his arm*)
Are you ready, Miss Plunkett, and May?

MISS PLUNKETT (*crossing to take his arm*)
Lead me right in, Cliff; I'm nearly starved.

RUTH (*in the right door, and speaking over her right shoulder to Snyder*)
Come on, Charlie.
[*He crosses to her, and gives her his left arm.*

CLIFF
You've got to go some to beat me.
[*Mrs. Fenner lowers the shade on the lower left window.*

MISS PLUNKETT
We look like a wedding, going in this way.
[*She and Cliff laugh, Snyder and Ruth go through the right door and Mrs. Fenner looks toward Miss Plunkett and then at Olly.*

MRS. FENNER (*in a suppressed rage*)
Put down those shades, Olly
[*But Olly is frozen to the spot.*

CLIFF (*indicating Ruth and Snyder*)
There go the bridesmaid and the best man ahead of us there.

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning back*)
Come on here, May, you've got to be the flower girl.

MAY (*following the procession*)
I haven't got any flowers.

MISS PLUNKETT
You won't need them at my wedding, dear; it'll be one of those "Please omit flowers" affairs. (*May laughs*) Come on here, Laura and Olly; you two can be the

matrons of honor. (*The curtain commences to descend slowly. Miss Plunkett turns, laughing, back to Cliff and they go out together*) Got to do this thing right you know; it's the nearest to it I'll ever come, I guess.

[*May reaches the door, and, with a glance back at her two aunts, who are still glaring narrowly after Miss Plunkett, goes out. Miss Plunkett's voice dies away in a laugh. Olly looks at Mrs. Fenner, their eyes meet, and Olly breaks down, burying her face in her hands.*

MRS. FENNER (*with a quick, impatient gesture, and crossing below Olly towards the right door*)

Now, don't start that, in front of Cliff. — Come out here and get your dinner.

[*Olly hobbles after her, touching her eyes.*

THE CURTAIN IS DOWN.

ACT II

After dinner.

May enters from the door at the right. She pauses, irresolute; then crosses up to an electric button just at the right of the street door and turns on the lights in the room. She comes back towards the door at the right and stops, glares out through the door, makes a movement of extreme resentment, and hurries up the stairs. Ruth enters, eating an after-dinner mint. She glances toward the porch at the left, then goes up and looks out through the windows at the back. She takes her handkerchief from her sleeve and comes forward, glancing up the stairs. Snyder wanders in, smoking a cigarette.

RUTH
Did you have enough to eat?
SNYDER (*crossing to the chair at the right of the center table*)
I had too much, I think.
RUTH (*moving forward and glancing out the right door*)
Don't you think I'm a pretty good cook?
SNYDER (*sitting down*)
Did you cook that dinner?
RUTH
I cooked some of it.
[*She closes the door.*
SNYDER
I see no reason why we shouldn't get along.
RUTH (*moving towards him*)
Listen, Charlie — if you get the chance while you're here to-night, I'd say something to Uncle Cliff.
SNYDER
About the houses, you mean?
RUTH
Yes, — about everything.
SNYDER
Haven't you said anything at all about it to him?
RUTH
Not yet, no. I talked it over with Mama, and she said she thought it'd sound better coming from you. Just get talking to him about the houses, and how much we like them, and all like that; and then tell him about us going to be married. And whenever he says the houses'll be finished, say that that was about the time we thought of getting married.
SNYDER
Do you want to be here when I tell him?

RUTH

Yes, I'll be here; but I'd rather you'd tell him; I think it'll look better.

SNYDER

It's the single house we want, isn't it?

RUTH

Yes, if we can get it. It might be sold by this time, for all we know.

SNYDER

It wasn't sold up till Thursday. —

RUTH

Wasn't it?

SNYDER

I came by there in the trolley.

RUTH

It's the only single one that isn't sold.

SNYDER

It had no SOLD sign on it.

RUTH

Well, ask him about that first; and if we can't get it, one of the others'll do.

[*She turns away, glancing toward the right door.*

SNYDER

What'll I do, say that we'd like to rent it, or buy it, or what?

RUTH (*turning to him again*)

Don't say anything, one way or the other. Just say we're going to be married, and we like those houses, and see what *he* says.

[*There is quite a general laugh from the dining room, and Ruth turns and crosses in that direction.*

CLIFF (*from the dining room*)

I think that fellow has the right idea.

MISS PLUNKETT AND OLLY (*speaking together*)

MISS PLUNKETT: Oh, listen to him! And I'll bet he'll be as meek as a lamb.

OLLY: Oh, isn't he terrible, Miss Plunkett!

RUTH (*moving up towards the windows at the back*)

He'll be in in a minute.

MISS PLUNKETT AND SNYDER (*speaking together*)

MISS PLUNKETT: I'll bet his wife'll be at the movies twice a day and he'll be afraid to say a word.

SNYDER: You'd better stay around in case I get a chance to speak to him; they're apt to be in and out all the time.

CLIFF (*coming towards the room*)

Yes, sir, that fellow has my idea right down to the ground.

OLLY AND MISS PLUNKETT (*speaking together*)

OLLY: It's easy seen he's not married, isn't it, Miss Plunkett?

MISS PLUNKETT: She'll change your ideas, if she's any thing like a couple that I know.

[*Cliff, Olly, and Miss Plunkett laugh.*

RUTH

The car's still out here, Charlie. Ask him when he comes in if he wants you to put it away.

[*She turns and feigns to be occupied with the piano scarf, and Cliff comes laughing into the room, taking a cigar from his pocket.*

SNYDER

I see the car's still out there, Mr. Mettinger; would you like me to put it away?

CLIFF (*going up to the windows at the back and glancing out*)

Why, yes, Charlie, you can put it away, if you don't mind. (*Snyder gets up and starts up towards the window, and Cliff moves over towards the table*) But there's no hurry about it; some of the girls may want to take a little ride through the Park before it gets dark.

[*Snyder glances out the window, toward the left.*

SNYDER

Do you want to go for a ride, Ruth?

RUTH

Sure, I'd like to go.

CLIFF (*lighting his cigar*)

We'll see what the others want to do when they get through out there. (*He moves around to the chair at the left of the table, and Snyder comes forward again to the chair at the right of the table*) Got something to smoke, Charlie?

SNYDER

Yes, thanks, Mr. Mettinger, I got some cigarettes here.

CLIFF

Would you rather have a cigar?

SNYDER

No, thanks, Mr. Mettinger, I prefer one of these.

CLIFF (*sitting down*)

I feel kind of tired after that ride up this afternoon.

SNYDER (*sitting down*)

How long did it take you, Mr. Mettinger?

CLIFF

Oh, close on to three hours I guess; we left there around three o'clock and — (*He looks at his watch, and Ruth, passing above the table, towards the left, catches Snyder's*

eye and indicates to him with a nod that now is a good time to speak) got here around six, I should say.

SNYDER (*touching some cigarette ashes on to the tray on the table*)

Very good road they have between here and Atlantic City, isn't it?

CLIFF (*smoking quietly*)

Yes, it is, — very good road. (*Ruth moves smoothly back towards the middle of the room, glancing at the right door*) Good all the way.

SNYDER

Lot of building going on right now, I suppose, between here and Atlantic.

CLIFF

Yes, quite a boom; especially in there around Haddonfield.

[*Ruth moves quietly again over towards the left.*

SNYDER

I guess the new bridge has had a lot to do with that, don't you think, Mr. Mettinger?

CLIFF

Oh, sure. Although I guess that's going on pretty much everywhere right now.

[*Snyder glances at Ruth and she holds his eye for the fraction of a second; then, with a slow nod, moves back again towards the middle of the room.*

SNYDER

How are those new houses of yours coming along, Mr. Mettinger?

CLIFF

First rate; I was over there about a week ago.

SNYDER
I was over there about a week ago, too.
CLIFF
Is that so?
RUTH (*coming forward in the center*)
Yes, Charlie and I took a ride over.
CLIFF
Pretty nice looking houses, don't you think?
RUTH AND SNYDER (*speaking together*)
RUTH: Yes, I think they're beautiful.
SNYDER: Yes, I think they look wonderful.
CLIFF
He's made a nice job of them.
SNYDER
Ruth has been over there nearly every week since they started to build them.
CLIFF
Is that so?
RUTH
I guess the men over there must think I own one of them.
SNYDER
You just built them to sell them, didn't you, Mr. Mettinger?
CLIFF
Yes, I've been selling them right along.
SNYDER
Yes, I noticed the SOLD sign on a lot of them.
CLIFF
Takes too long to get anywhere on a rental basis. The two corner ones went as soon as I began to build; and since then I've sold seven of the others.

RUTH

That only leaves three of them, then, doesn't it, Uncle Cliff?

CLIFF

That's all, — one pair of twin houses and a single one. (*He glances away, and Ruth gives Snyder a definite nod; then moves over towards the left again. Snyder turns to the ash tray and deposits some more ashes*) And I guess they'll be going any day now: McCarthy says he expects to finish up around there about the first of June.

[*There is a slight pause.*

SNYDER (*leaning forward slightly*)

I'd be interested in getting hold of that single one, Mr. Mettinger.

[*Cliff looks at him.*

CLIFF

You mean, to buy it?

SNYDER

Well, anything you'd like, Mr. Mettinger.

CLIFF (*reaching to put some cigar ashes on the tray*)

Well, —

[*Snyder holds the tray towards him, with a touch of the obsequious.*

RUTH (*coming forward at the left*)

Charlie has something to tell you, Uncle Cliff.

SNYDER

I guess your Uncle Cliff has guessed it by this time.

CLIFF

What is it? You two going to get married?

SNYDER

Why, we thought about it, Mr. Mettinger.

CLIFF

Your mother know about it, Ruth?

RUTH

Yes, Mama knows about it.

SNYDER

We thought of doing it about the first of June; and Ruth seems to be so crazy about those houses, — I thought I'd speak to you and see what chance there was of getting hold of one of them.

MISS PLUNKETT (*entering from the right door*)

My name is absolutely Dennis out there in that kitchen, Cliff; they won't let me do a thing.

[*She comes to the middle of the room, and Ruth turns and moves back a little, leaning against the upper arm of the sofa.*

CLIFF

I thought *you* were on a vacation.

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, I'm a terrible vacationist, Cliff; I'm too used to hard work.

OLLY (*entering from the right door*)

I was just telling Miss Plunkett, Cliff, we *will* not allow a visitor to wash dishes.

MISS PLUNKETT

But I'm a grand dish-washer, Cliff, (*they all laugh*) and they won't let me even dry. (*Snyder continues to laugh, and Miss Plunkett makes a little move towards him as though to ruffle his hair*) What are you laughing at, you poor nut. Isn't that a shame, Olly, to waste all that grand curly hair on a nut like that. Just imagine what some girl would give for that.

CLIFF

I was just saying to Charlie that some of you might want

to take a little ride through the park before I put the car away.

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning and going to the piano*)

Not for me, Cliff, thanks; I've had enough riding for the rest of my life.

[*She sits at the piano and opens it.*

CLIFF

Would you like to go for a little ride, Olly?

OLLY

Why, yes, I'd like to go, if you don't go too fast.

CLIFF

Charlie'll drive you.

SNYDER

You're not allowed to go more than thirty miles an hour through the park.

OLLY

I've got to go over to my house for some things, though, first.

CLIFF

You can stop on the way back.

OLLY

All right, if they'll do that.

[*She starts for the stairs.*

CLIFF

You want to go, don't you, Ruth?

RUTH (*crossing*)

Yes, I'm going.

CLIFF (*rising and going up at the left*)

How about May?

RUTH

She's upstairs, I think.

OLLY (*coming back again*)
When are you going; right away?
CLIFF
I don't care, whenever you want to.
RUTH
I'll have to go up and get my things.
[*Snyder rises and moves up towards the windows.*
OLLY (*hurrying out at the right*)
I'll tell Laura.
CLIFF
See if May's up there, Ruth, will you?
RUTH
All right.
CLIFF
See if *she* wants to go. Do you want to drive, Charlie?
[*He takes a key ring from his pocket and detaches a key.*
SNYDER
Yes, I don't mind, Mr. Mettinger, unless you want to, yourself.
CLIFF
No, I don't think I'll go with you to-night.
SNYDER
Had enough riding to-day, eh?
[*Miss Plunkett touches the piano gingerly.*
CLIFF
Yes, I think I've had enough for to-day.
SNYDER
Is the car locked?
CLIFF
The motor is. I think I'll stay here and keep Miss Plunkett company.

MISS PLUNKETT

You don't have to keep me company, Cliff; I'm never lonesome.

CLIFF (*giving Snyder the key*)

There you are.

SNYDER

Thanks. (*Cliff comes forward to the chair at the right of the table and Snyder crosses to the table for his hat*) I'll go out and get the car ready.

MISS PLUNKETT

I can talk to myself if I get lonesome.

[*Cliff laughs lightly.*

CLIFF

You know what they say about people that talk to themselves, don't you, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

I guess they say it about me anyway, Cliff; so I might as well enjoy the privileges of my reputation. (*They all laugh. Miss Plunkett strikes a couple of chords on the piano, Cliff sits down and Snyder goes out. Then Miss Plunkett rests her elbow on the keyboard and turns to Cliff*) You know it's a funny thing, though, Cliff, — people think you're crazy any more if you laugh. (*He is amused*) That's a positive fact. I catch people looking at me all the time as though I didn't have a grain of sense. I know your sister Laura here thinks I'm completely gone. (*Cliff laughs*) And Olly thinks I never *was* here. (*Cliff laughs again*) But, I should worry. (*She strikes a rather ambitious chord on the piano*) Anytime I can't laugh, I want to call it a day. (*Turning to Cliff*) What else is there to it, Cliff, if you don't get a laugh?

CLIFF

Not much I guess, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

There's nothing at all that I can see. Going around with one of those faces that looks as though it got caught in a wringer. (*He laughs hard and low, and Miss Plunkett turns to the piano again*) Not me. Give me liberty or give me laughs. And you can have the liberty.

[*She strikes a few more notes.*

OLLY (*entering hurriedly from the right*)

I'll have to put my hat on. (*She stops at the mirror, forward, and touches her hair*) My hair is so fine and there's so much of it that it just goes perfectly wild in a machine.

[*She starts for the stairs.*

MISS PLUNKETT

Why don't you bob it, Olly?

OLLY

Oh, my husband would leave me on the spot, Miss Plunkett.

[*She goes up.*

MISS PLUNKETT

That's a good thing to know, in case you ever want to get rid of him. (*Olly and Cliff laugh, and Miss Plunkett taps a few more notes. Then she drops her hands into her lap and looks rather wistfully at the keyboard*) I wish I could play the piano.

CLIFF

May plays pretty well.

MISS PLUNKETT

Yes, she played for me several times at the shore.

CLIFF

She's taken lessons for a long time.

MISS PLUNKETT

That was the dream of my life when I was a kid, to take music lessons.

CLIFF

Didn't you ever take any?

MISS PLUNKETT

We couldn't afford it. I didn't have the time, anyway; I was kept too busy doing housework and minding the other kids. But I was always pretending I could play, on the table; we didn't have a piano.

CLIFF (*smoking quietly*)

I think it's nice to have a little music in the house.

MISS PLUNKETT

You don't play, do you, Cliff?

CLIFF

No, I don't play.

MISS PLUNKETT

Do you play anything at all?

CLIFF

You mean, any musical instrument?

MISS PLUNKETT

Anything. Any games or anything.

CLIFF

I don't have much time for anything like that, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT (*rising slowly and coming towards him*)

You ought to make a little time, Cliff. There's something else in life besides slaving all your days. And what are you slaving for? To leave it to a lot of relatives to fight over. (*She turns away slowly to the right, and becomes conscious of the little lady's chair*) This

is a funny little chair, Cliff. (*She rocks it back and forth*) I haven't seen a chair like this in years.

CLIFF

It's what they used to call a lady's chair, I think.

MISS PLUNKETT

It looks like a lady. I think I'll sit in it, make people believe I'm one. (*She sits down and rocks a little in it*) It's kind of an old lady, though, isn't it? (*Cliff laughs*) Listen to the way it's creaking.

CLIFF

It's been there ever since I was a boy.

MISS PLUNKETT

You know I can't quite picture you as a boy, Cliff.

CLIFF

How is that, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

I don't know; somehow or another, you look to me like a man that's never had very much fun.

CLIFF

Oh, I've had some pretty good times, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

Not many, I'll bet.

CLIFF

No, not so many; but I expect to have a few before I finish up.

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, you'd better start in, Cliff, while you're young enough to appreciate it.

CLIFF

I'm not any spring chicken now, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

You've got a few good years ahead of you. And I

hope you'll use them, Cliff. (*She looks out and away off*) It seems to me we're young such a short time and old so long.

CLIFF

It isn't always so easy to do just what you want to do in this world, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

No, but I think a lot of us could do it oftener than we do.

CLIFF

It seems to me that it's always been necessary for somebody to stand by around here. Somebody had to look after my mother after the girls went. And I knew that the dread of my mother's life was that I'd bring a daughter-in-law in to her. And by the time she went, there were May and her mother here.

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, things happen that way sometimes for people, Cliff. But I think it's a terrible thing to let yourself be cheated out of life. Of course, it's all right to do the right thing by people, but be sure you do the right thing by yourself while you're at it. Because half the time they don't appreciate it. And then where do you get off? Just a funny old bird that never married. Good picking for them, if you happen to have a few dollars. I've been through it all, Cliff; nobody can tell me anything about it. It was a great joke at home whenever a fellow looked at me. They used to laugh me out of it. One of those eldest daughter things. I wasn't supposed to marry; I was needed at home, to wait on the rest of them. But the minute they took a notion to go, — try and stop them. The last of them went about four years ago; and left me nice and flat, out in the

alley — at thirty-five years of age — without a home or a job. A couple of them offered me a home, but because I wouldn't let their kids kick me in the shins and say nothing, I was just a cranky old maid. And their mothers thought it was funny. So I dropped them all cold after a bit and started a little store. Dry goods and notions — mostly notions. I didn't know how to do anything else — but housework. But it turned out all right, thank God! I have a nice little business now; and my own dollar. And that's the way I'm going to stay, too. And they've all been eating out of my hand ever since. And believe me, they don't eat anything out of my hand unless they earn it, either. So much for so much. Any time any of them want anything out of me, they come right down to my store and work for it. And it's been the making of a couple of them. (*She folds her arms and rocks back and forth, narrowing her eyes shrewdly. Evidently the chair annoys her, for she glances at the side of it disapprovingly and then gets up*) This chair is too much of a lady for me; I think I'll play the piano some more.

[*She moves up the middle of the room towards the piano, fluttering the fingers of her right hand towards Cliff, as though running a scale. He leans forward on his knees, looking critically at the tip of the cigar.*

CLIFF

Are you sorry you didn't marry, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

Sometimes. (*She leans against the piano and looks thoughtfully at the floor*) Although if I had I wouldn't know as much as I know now. Of course I might have been happier, but I think it's better to be wise than happy:

because if you're wise you've always got something; and if you're just happy, — you haven't. (*She sits down at the piano*) Besides, I think if you're going to marry, you should do it when you're young; — go through the hard days together; then there'll be something to keep you together when the good ones come.

[*She touches the keys moodily, and Cliff sits very still, looking at the smoke from his cigar. There is a pause, and then Mrs. Fenner comes in from the right, drying a glass pitcher. She stops just inside the door and shifts her eyes from one to the other. Cliff looks at her, without moving.*

CLIFF

Want to go for a ride, Laura?

MRS. FENNER

No, thanks, there's too much to be done out here.

MISS PLUNKETT

I'll do the dishes for you, Laura, if you want to go.

MRS. FENNER

No, you wont, now, Miss Plunkett; I told you I would not allow that.

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, you see they're all leaving you flat, so it's your own fault if you have to do them all yourself.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I'm used to being left flat, as you say, Miss Plunkett.

MISS PLUNKETT (*getting up and moving to the middle of the room*)

So am I, Laura; you've got nothing on me. I've been left flat so many times that I'm all flattened out. (*She laughs to Cliff, and he reflects it*) Don't have to diet or

exercise or anything. (*She laughs again and turns to Mrs. Fenner*) But not any more; you can put that down in the book — not if I see it coming. Oh, no. Anybody shows any signs of leaving me flat, I beat them to it. (*She turns and crosses towards the left, above the table*) Ain't that right, Cliff?

CLIFF

That's the right idea, Daisy, if you can do it.

MISS PLUNKETT (*leaning on the back of the chair at the left of the table and looking away out*)

You can do it; but you've got to get over all your illusions first. — Especially your illusions about your own people. (*She looks at Cliff, and then shifts her eyes to Mrs. Fenner*) That's what I had to do. (*Sauntering back and standing at Cliff's right shoulder, resting her hand on his chair*) And I've been a happy woman ever since. Ever since I woke up to the fact that they'll let the willing horse pull the load.

MRS. FENNER

Aren't you going out for a ride, Miss Plunkett?

MISS PLUNKETT

No, I'm going to stay here and keep Cliff company.

MRS. FENNER

Aren't you going either, Cliff?

MISS PLUNKETT

No, he's going to stay here with me, ain't you, Cliff?

CLIFF

I think I've had enough riding for to-day.

MISS PLUNKETT

I'm going to see if I can't vamp him, Laura. (*Cliff is amused and Mrs. Fenner tries to be. Miss Plunkett moves towards the left*) Do you mind, Cliff? (*She laughs*)

I've never tried to vamp anybody yet, I'd like to see how good I am at it.

[*She comes forward at the left.*

MRS. FENNER

I'm afraid Cliff is a rather hard subject for a beginner.

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, somebody'll nail him, Laura, don't worry. I'll bet he's been vamped a dozen times, haven't you, Cliff? (*He laughs*) Come on, now, 'fess up, Cliff. (*He continues to laugh*) I bet there isn't a trick he doesn't know. Do you see the way he's laughing?

MRS. FENNER

I can't quite see Cliff being vamped.

MISS PLUNKETT

He wouldn't let you see him, would you, Cliff? I know these old birds, Laura, they don't miss a trick. Didn't you ever have a girl, Cliff? (*He roars, and Miss Plunkett crosses in front of him to the middle of the room and stands facing the back wall*) You darn fool. Didn't he, Laura?

MRS. FENNER

Not to my knowledge he hasn't.

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, come on, I'll bet he was a regular sheik down there along that board walk at Atlantic City about ten years ago. Look at all the nice hair he used to have.

[*She crosses back of him to the lower window at the left.*

RUTH (*coming down the stairs, with her hat and fur on*)

Charlie's going to run us over to Aunt Olly's, Mama; she wants to get some things.

[*She goes to the windows at the back and glances out.*

MRS. FENNER (*going towards the windows*)

Where *is* Charlie, out front?

RUTH (*going to the door*)

Yes. May says she doesn't want to go, Uncle Cliff; she's up in her room.

CLIFF

Is she feeling all right?

RUTH

Yes, she's unpacking her things.

OLLY (*coming down the stairs, with her hat on, and putting on her gloves*)

Are you waiting for me?

RUTH

She said to ask you to come up, Miss Plunkett, as soon as you were through with your dinner.

[*Cliff rises and goes up at the right of the table to the door.*

MISS PLUNKETT AND OLLY (*speaking together*)

MISS PLUNKETT: All right, dear, thanks; I'll go up in a minute.

OLLY: (*at the mirror*) I hope I haven't kept you all waiting.

RUTH (*outside*)

Come on, Aunt Olly, Charlie's in the car.

[*Cliff goes out.*

OLLY (*crossing to the door*)

We'll only be a few minutes, Laura; I only have to get a few things.

MRS. FENNER

There's no hurry. Tell Ruth to be sure and come back here, I want to see her.

OLLY

And if you want to leave those things out there, Laura, I'll help you with them when I come back.

[*She goes out.*

MRS. FENNER

All right.

CLIFF (*from outside*)

Sure you don't want to go, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

No, thanks, Cliff; I don't want to go.

MRS. FENNER (*starting suddenly for the door*)

Oh, tell them to wait a minute, Cliff; I want to tell Olly something.

[*She hurries out, leaving the pitcher and towel on a stand at the back.*

CLIFF

Wait a minute, Charlie; Laura wants to tell Olly something.

[*Miss Plunkett moves up to the windows at the back and looks out keenly. Then she turns away, with a bitter little sound of amusement to herself, and moves to the piano. Upon reaching the piano she laughs hard and strikes the keyboard three times with both hands as though giving vent to some devilish amusement in herself. Then she straightens up and laughs heartily, sinking against the piano finally. When she has finished her laughter, she starts picking notes on the keyboard. Mrs. Fenner comes in, closes the door, picks up the pitcher and towel, and, with a narrow look toward Miss Plunkett, goes towards the right door.*

MRS. FENNER

I thought you'd gone upstairs, Miss Plunkett.

[*She goes out.*

MISS PLUNKETT

No, I'm taking a music lesson here.

[*There is a slight pause, during which Miss Plunkett con-*

tinues to amuse herself at the piano: then Mrs. Fenner steps through the door again.

MRS. FENNER

I'm sorry to tell you, Miss Plunkett, but the piano is supposed to be closed. (*Miss Plunkett is standing, and she just looks at Mrs. Fenner under her eyes*) You know we had a death in this house only a month ago.

MISS PLUNKETT (*quietly*)

How long are you going to close it for?

MRS. FENNER

Why, it's customary to close it for a year.

MISS PLUNKETT (*sauntering forward to the middle of the room*)

That's a thing I could never see any sense to, — closing up a piano for a whole year.

MRS. FENNER (*going up to close the piano, and putting the pitcher and towel on the piano*)

Well, I don't think it would sound very nice to hear music coming from a house where there'd been a funeral within a month.

MISS PLUNKETT (*occupied with her necklace*)

There's nothing the matter with music, Laura, if it's the right kind. They have music at funerals.

MRS. FENNER

Well, of course, one has to consider other people occasionally in this world, Miss Plunkett.

MISS PLUNKETT

I know all about considering other people, Laura; — that's the reason I think it's silly.

MRS. FENNER (*settling the piano scarf*)

The neighbors would certainly have a very fine impression of this family, I *must* say.

MISS PLUNKETT (*moving slowly towards the stairway*)
That shouldn't worry *you* a lot, Laura; — they're not your neighbors.

MRS. FENNER (*picking up the pitcher and towel*)
It was my sister that died, Miss Plunkett.

MISS PLUNKETT (*stopping at the foot of the stairs, with her back to Mrs. Fenner*)
That shouldn't worry you much either —

MRS. FENNER (*stonily*)
Well, I happen to be one of the kind that it does worry.

MISS PLUNKETT
May told me at Atlantic City that you didn't speak to your sister for nearly four years before she died — (*turning slowly and looking directly at Mrs. Fenner*); why should *you* go into such heavy mourning.

MRS. FENNER (*starting for the right door*)
Well, the piano is to be closed, whether it meets with your approval or not.

MISS PLUNKETT
Close it up, Laura —

MRS. FENNER (*going out*)
And I wish you'd remember it.

MISS PLUNKETT (*wandering back towards the middle of the room*)
I can't play on it, anyway.
[*There is a slight pause, and then Mrs. Fenner comes in again.*

MRS. FENNER
And I also wish you'd remember, Miss Plunkett, that *my* name is Mrs. Fenner. (*Miss Plunkett turns quietly and looks at her, steadily*) I'm not in the habit myself of calling people I've only known a couple of hours by

their first names, and I don't expect them to call me by mine.

MISS PLUNKETT

Now, do you think it's necessary, Laura, for you to tell me what *your* name is.

MRS. FENNER

Well, evidently you don't know it.

MISS PLUNKETT

I know it better than I know my own.

MRS. FENNER

Well, then, I wish you'd use it, if you do.

MISS PLUNKETT

I might do more than that for you, Laura, if you're dumb enough to drive me to it. I'll spell your name out for you here sometime — backwards; — and right in front of your brother too.

[*There is a slight pause.*

MRS. FENNER

Have you come here to make trouble in this family, Miss Plunkett?

MISS PLUNKETT

No, I'll leave that to you; you're good at that. But I'll see to it that you don't make any trouble for *me*, while you're about it. This is not your house, and I've been invited here for a week. And my name is Daisy Mayme Plunkett; and I'm going to *plunk* right here till my week is up; (*she moves to the stairs, holding Mrs. Fenner's eye*) unless your brother lets me see that he doesn't want me here.

[*She goes up the stairs; and Mrs. Fenner stands irresolute for a second, thinking. Suddenly she whirls to the foot of the stairs and stands glaring up after Miss Plunkett.*

Cliff's step is heard on the front porch. She darts a quick look through the windows at the back, and, with a conclusive nod of her head, hurries out through the right door. Cliff comes in, carrying the evening paper. He comes forward to the chair at the right of the table, glancing out through the right door.

CLIFF

Bring in a couple of matches when you're coming, will you, Laura.

[*He sits down, taking a cigar from his pocket.*

MRS. FENNER

All right. (*Cliff opens the paper and glances at the headlines, and immediately Mrs. Fenner comes through the right door with a few matches and crosses to him, giving a narrow glare over her left shoulder toward the stairway*) Where have you been, Cliff; down for a paper?

CLIFF

Yes, I suppose the boy hasn't been leaving it since I've been away. Thanks.

[*He lights his cigar, and Mrs. Fenner drifts over towards the stairway.*

MRS. FENNER

They don't leave ours half the time when we're home.

CLIFF

Are you all finished up out there?

MRS. FENNER

Pretty nearly; I only have to put a few things away.

CLIFF

You should have gone along *with* them, Laura; get a little air.

MRS. FENNER

Somebody has to stay and clean up out here, Cliff.

CLIFF

Couldn't you have waited till you'd get back? — and then they could all give you a hand.

MRS. FENNER

We can't have Miss Plunkett doing dishes, Cliff.

CLIFF

Well, the others could have helped, and I don't think Miss Plunkett would mind.

MRS. FENNER (*moving towards him*)

Well, I'm sure she never accepted an invitation here, Cliff, with the idea of doing dishes.

CLIFF (*turning to her*)

May explained the situation to her here when she invited her.

MRS. FENNER

I don't think she could have made it very clear, Cliff.

CLIFF

She told me she explained it thoroughly. And I took particular pains to explain it myself, coming up in the car; so Miss Plunkett knew exactly what she was in for. In fact, they expected to have to pitch right in and get their own dinner; that's the reason Miss Plunkett suggested that they get out at the corner store down here; they didn't know you folks would *be* here.

MRS. FENNER

I'm surprised that she came, then, Cliff.

CLIFF

Why not?

MRS. FENNER

I mean, knowing that there'd be nobody here to do anything for her.

CLIFF

She doesn't *want* anybody to do anything for her; she and May intended to manage things between them, till I'd get somebody. What are you smiling at?

MRS. FENNER

I'm smiling at the idea of May managing things.

CLIFF

Well, that's the reason Miss Plunkett came, to give her a hand; and cheer her up a bit till she'd get used to the idea of her mother not being here any more.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I don't think May should have done that, Cliff.

CLIFF

Done what?

MRS. FENNER

Why, play on Miss Plunkett's sympathy that way.

CLIFF

I don't think May played on her sympathy at all.

MRS. FENNER

Well, she must have told her something, Cliff; otherwise I'm perfectly certain that a woman as practical as Miss Plunkett appears to be would never have consented to pitch in and do housework for a family that she's only known a couple of weeks.

CLIFF

She *likes* May.

MRS. FENNER

Of course she does.

CLIFF

And she wanted to *come* here; they expected to have a pleasant time together.

MRS. FENNER

That's what I say; that May should have discouraged it.

CLIFF (*turning away, puzzled*)

I don't know how you figure that.

MRS. FENNER

Because she must have known that we wouldn't allow a perfect stranger that was here on a visit to do housework. I was just saying to Olly before dinner that we'd have to come to some arrangement about one of *us* being here.

CLIFF (*turning back to her*)

Now, you and Olly don't have to put yourselves out at all, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Well, one of us would have to be here, in any case, Cliff, till you get somebody.

CLIFF

And what do you think I've been doing all this past *month* without anybody?

MRS. FENNER

But, May wasn't *here* then, Cliff, or this woman. (*Moving towards the stairs again*) Besides, it's the looks of the thing *I'm* thinking of; I'd be simply mortified.

CLIFF

Miss Plunkett didn't have to come here if she didn't want to.

MRS. FENNER (*coming back*)

But, you don't know what May *said* to her, Cliff. And she's probably a good-natured person that felt sorry at the thought of May coming home to an empty house. She very likely has a house of her own to attend to, — or a business of some kind.

CLIFF (*resuming his paper*)

Well, if she has, I think she has sense enough to say so.

MRS. FENNER

Well, it wouldn't do any harm, anyway, Cliff, to ask her; because I really think somebody should say *something.*

CLIFF

What can you say?

MRS. FENNER

Just let her know that you don't want her to inconvenience herself, — out of consideration for May; because Olly and I can help out until you get some one, and Ruth will be very glad to come over when I can't.

[*He turns away, thinking.*

CLIFF

Seems to me that 'd sound kind of funny, saying that to a person.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I'm sure Miss Plunkett is much too sensible to misunderstand you, Cliff.

MAY (*at the head of the stairs*)

I'm going down, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

All right, Doll.

MRS. FENNER (*going towards the right door*)

Of course, you can suit yourself about it, Cliff, — but I really think somebody ought to say something.

[*She goes out, and there is a pause, during which Cliff thinks hard; then resumes his paper. May comes down the stairs quietly. She senses the situation, and looks narrowly at Cliff; then moves forward to the mirror, glancing out through the right door.*

CLIFF (*without looking at her*)

Where have you been keeping yourself, May?

MAY (*touching her hair at the glass*)

I've been changing my dress, and unpacking.

CLIFF

Is Miss Plunkett upstairs?

MAY (*moving towards him, to the back of the lady's chair*)

Yes, she'll be down in a minute. (*She rests her hand on the back of the lady's chair, glances through the right door again, then speaks directly to Cliff, lowering her voice*) Is Aunt Laura going to be here all next week, Uncle Cliff?

CLIFF

Why, I don't know, May.

MAY

Didn't you hear what she said out there at the dinner table about one of them staying here till you get somebody?

CLIFF (*turning to her*)

Well, she meant that now that you're home and Miss Plunkett is here, it 'd be better if one of them 'd come over and help out.

MAY (*in a sudden temper, and turning to the back of the room*)

Well, we don't need them to help out, Uncle Cliff; we're not babies. (*Turning to him again, with a glare toward the right door*) And Daisy and I can't have any fun, with them watching every move we make.

CLIFF

Now, that's not the way to look at it, May.

MAY (*coming towards him*)

Well, why are they getting so good all of a sudden? They haven't been doing anything here since Mama died; and before that we hardly ever saw any of them.

CLIFF

Well, Laura said she thought it wouldn't look very nice to have Daisy doing housework around here.

MAY

Daisy'd love to do it; that's what she told me when she said she'd come up here for a week. She said she kept house for years for her brothers and sisters when she was home.

CLIFF

Well, why don't you tell your Aunt Laura that, May?

MAY (*turning towards the right door*)

I'll tell her; and I'll tell her more than that if she gives Daisy any more of her looks.

CLIFF

When was she giving Daisy any looks?

MAY

Why, she's been doing it ever since Daisy came in. She wants her to get insulted and leave here.

CLIFF

Now, don't talk that way, May.

MAY (*crossing to him*)

That's just what she wants, Uncle Cliff; and Daisy can see it as well as I can.

CLIFF

Daisy hasn't said anything, has she?

MAY

Yes. She said she's having the best time she's ever had in her life watching Aunt Laura and Olly.

CLIFF

How did she happen to say that?

MAY

Why, I was apologizing to her upstairs a few minutes

ago for the way they acted at the dinner table tonight.

CLIFF

I didn't see them do anything, May.

MAY

Well, you must be blind, Uncle Cliff; for I was never so embarrassed in my life.

CLIFF

What were they doing?

MAY

Why, the looks they were giving each other every time Daisy said anything to you. That's the reason Daisy was laughing so much. And the way Aunt Laura was talking that time about it being necessary for one of them to be over here all the time to take care of *you*. I simply couldn't eat my dinner, — that was the reason I went upstairs.

[*She turns to the back of the room, and Miss Plunkett appears on the stairway.*

MISS PLUNKETT

What are *you* raving about?

MAY

The same thing that I was raving to you about upstairs a minute ago.

MISS PLUNKETT (*crossing to her, holding up a salt-water taffy*)

You'd better have a salt-water taffy and calm your nerves.

MAY

I don't want any now, Daisy, thanks.

CLIFF

That's what I think she's doing, Daisy, just raving.

MAY
Daisy knows I'm not raving.

MISS PLUNKETT (*coming forward to Cliff*)
Don't worry about me, Kid; I'm having a grand time. Do you want a salt-water taffy, Cliff?

CLIFF
No, thank you, Daisy; I never eat candy.

MISS PLUNKETT (*crossing to the lady's chair*)
You don't know what you are missing.

CLIFF
Daisy —

MISS PLUNKETT
What?

CLIFF
Daisy, May's got an idea into her head that her Aunts have been giving you funny looks.
[*Miss Plunkett laughs.*

MAY
So they have.

MISS PLUNKETT
I never knew there were so many kinds of looks in the world, Cliff; they've been everything from black to pale blue.

CLIFF
Well, I'm sure you're both mistaken, Daisy, for there's no reason why Laura and Olly should be giving anybody any funny looks.

MISS PLUNKETT
They're not funny looks, Cliff; they're dirty looks.

CLIFF
Well, why should they?

MAY

We know why, don't we, Daisy?

CLIFF

Well, tell me, May, if you know.

MISS PLUNKETT

Don't pay any attention to her, Cliff.

CLIFF

Why, your Aunt Laura was saying to me here just before you came down that I ought to say something to Daisy about not inconveniencing herself — (*May looks at Daisy, and Daisy turns her head slowly and looks knowingly out through the right door*) She said she thought you were just staying here out of consideration for May.

MISS PLUNKETT

That's the best thing I've heard yet.

CLIFF

No, I mean she was afraid that perhaps May had played on your sympathies by telling you that there was nobody here to do anything; (*Daisy turns and looks at him, steadily*) and she said she thought I ought to tell you not to let that influence you, if you had a house or a business of your own to attend to. — *You* see what I mean, don't you, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

Sure, *I* see what you mean.

MAY

Daisy was going to stay down at Atlantic City another week, anyway, weren't you, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

Yes, I don't have to go home at any certain time.

CLIFF

Well, that's what she meant, Daisy. (*May gives him a*

pitying look and moves over towards the piano) And I guess the looks that May imagines she saw were simply Laura's and Olly's embarrassment that you might think that they expected you to do any housework around here. [*Miss Plunkett laughs lightly.*

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, that's all right, Cliff, I don't mind. I didn't come here to visit them anyway; I came to visit May.

CLIFF

Well, I want you to feel that you're more than welcome, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

I know I am, Cliff.

CLIFF

And if you've gotten any other kind of an impression, I want to assure you it isn't the right one. Anybody that's here to visit May is here to visit me; (*May moves back towards him*) and if Laura and Olly don't want to put themselves out a bit to wait on us — they don't have to; we can get along very nicely without them. May says that you two can get along yourselves till I get somebody.

MAY

That's what we wanted to do, isn't it, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

Sure; I wouldn't have come at all if I'd thought anybody was going to have to wait on me.

CLIFF

Well, I don't think your Aunt Laura understands that right, May: so if she says anything about it to you, you just tell her that that's the way you'd like it to be. (*May looks at Daisy, Cliff resumes his paper, and Miss*

Plunkett turns slowly and looks out through the right door with a mysterious expression) No use in dragging them back and forth over here when you'd rather do things for yourself.

MAY (*turning to the street door*)

Do you want to go round and see those big trees at the back of the house, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT (*rising, with a glance toward the right door*)

Grand! I'd love to, darling.

MAY (*stopping, with her hand on the door knob*)

Do you want to go, Uncle Cliff?

CLIFF

Where are you going?

MAY

Daisy wants to see the trees at the back of the house.

CLIFF

Sure, I'll go with you.

[*He closes the paper, tosses it on to the table, and rises, — crossing in front of the table to the left.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*stopping in the middle of the room, facing May*)

But before we go, May, I'll tell you what I wish you'd do for me.

MAY

What?

[*They all keep perfectly still.*

MISS PLUNKETT

Play me something on the piano.

MAY (*moving to the piano*)

Certainly, dear.

MISS PLUNKETT

Do you mind?

MAY
I'd love it, Daisy.
CLIFF (*following May*)
May'll play for you anytime, Daisy; she likes to play.
MISS PLUNKETT (*with her eye on the right door*)
I'd love to hear her play right now.
CLIFF
She often plays for us here in the evening.
MISS PLUNKETT
I think I'll enjoy the trees better after I've heard her play.
CLIFF
Play her something nice, now, May.
MAY
What do you want me to play, Daisy?
MISS PLUNKETT
I don't care; just so it's kind of nippy. (*They laugh a little*) Play me that piece you used to play for me at Atlantic.
MAY
Berceuse?
MISS PLUNKETT
Berceuse! The one with all the little doo-das in it.
[*May laughs.*
CLIFF (*lifting the shade in the alcove above May*)
Have you got light enough there, May?
MAY
I think so.
[*She starts to play, Cliff standing above her, watching her; and Miss Plunkett moves forward at the right, looking out through the right door, and crosses below the lady's chair to the middle of the room, where she turns slowly and stands*

waiting for Mrs. Fenner. After several bars of the music, Mrs. Fenner enters hurriedly from the right and stands aghast, just inside the door, looking from one to the other.

MISS PLUNKETT (*casually*)

You're just in time for the concert, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Is that *you* playing the piano, May?

[*May just raises her eyes and looks at her.*

MISS PLUNKETT

I asked her to play something for *me;* I was feeling kind of romantic.

MRS. FENNER

Isn't the piano going to be closed, Cliff?

[*May stops playing, and looks at Cliff.*

CLIFF

Why, I hadn't thought about it at all, Laura, to tell you the truth.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I certainly think it ought to be closed for a while.

MAY

It's *been* closed for a month.

MRS. FENNER

But it's customary to close a piano for a year, May, after a death in the family.

MAY

Well, it can't be closed for a year, Aunt Laura, for I have to practice, and Mama wouldn't want me to stop that.

[*There is a slight pause.*

MRS. FENNER

The neighbors'll certainly have a good opinion of us, Cliff.

CLIFF (*thoughtfully*)

Well, I'm afraid we'll have to leave that to May, Laura. (*May looks straight at her aunt and resumes playing; and Mrs. Fenner shifts her eyes to Miss Plunkett and looks at her with a smoldering bitterness. Miss Plunkett, however, disregards it utterly, simply touching her necklace and looking away off, rather meekly. There is a terrific banging at the street door. May stops playing abruptly and Miss Plunkett whirls nervously and looks toward the door*) Holy Smoke!

MISS PLUNKETT

I thought somebody was taking a shot at me.

[*May rises and comes a step or two forward to look at the door.*

CLIFF (*crossing hurriedly*)

Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

MAY

What on earth is that!

[*Cliff opens the door wide.*

FILOON

Couldn't find the push-button —

MISS PLUNKETT (*to May*)

Here comes my fellow!

MRS. FENNER AND CLIFF (*speaking together*)

MRS. FENNER: (*going out at the right*) My God, what next!

CLIFF: How do you do, Mr. Filoon?

MAY AND FILOON (*speaking together*)

MAY: (*to Miss Plunkett*) Do you want to go upstairs?

FILOON: (*coming in*) Had to rap on the door with my cane.

MISS PLUNKETT AND CLIFF (*speaking together*)
MISS PLUNKETT: No, I want to hear him.
CLIFF: That's all right, Mr. Filoon, come right in.
FILOON (*coming forward to the chair at the right of the table*)
Broke my glasses yesterday, and I'm as blind as a cave-fish ever since.
CLIFF (*closing the door*)
That's too bad.
FILOON
It was the hose that done it.
CLIFF
Is that so?
FILOON
Got away from me for a minute and twisted in my hand.
CLIFF
I see.
FILOON (*with a deft gesture*)
Whistp! — Took 'em off as clean as a trout and smashed them on the flags.
CLIFF (*indicating the chair at the right of the table*)
Sit down right here, Mr. Filoon.
FILOON
Thank you, sir, I will for a minute. (*He removes his hat*) Good evening, ladies.
MAY AND MISS PLUNKETT (*speaking together*)
MAY: Good evening.
MISS PLUNKETT: Good evening, Mr. Filoon.
FILOON
I wanted to see that young woman from Harrisburg I was talking to a while ago.
[*Miss Plunkett advances.*

CLIFF
Here she is, right here, Mr. Filoon.
FILOON
Ah, yes, I see now. Fine looking young woman.
CLIFF (*reaching for Filoon's hat and cane*)
Can I take these things out of your way, Mr. Filoon?
FILOON
No, thank you just the same, I'll keep them by me — not making you a short answer. I can't stay but a minute, it's close on to my bedtime.
[*Cliff crosses above the table and comes forward at the left.*
MISS PLUNKETT
You must go to bed pretty early, Mr. Filoon, don't you?
FILOON
Wha' say?
MISS PLUNKETT
I say, you must go to bed pretty early.
FILOON
That's right, pretty early; eight o'clock, summer and winter.
MISS PLUNKETT
Is that so?
FILOON
Yes, Ma'm, three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. Eight to five, that's my schedule.
CLIFF
Keep out of a lot of mischief with those hours, Mr. Filoon.
FILOON
That's right, that's right; but I got into plenty in my time.
[*He cackles.*

MISS PLUNKETT

How long ago has it been since you were in Harrisburg, Mr. Filoon?

FILOON

Eighteen and eighty-two.

MISS PLUNKETT

That's quite a while ago, isn't it?

FILOON

That's right, good many years ago. Lots of changes up that way I guess.

MISS PLUNKETT

Yes, I guess there are, Mr. Filoon.

[*The street door opens and Olly comes in, carrying a lady's black satchel. She pauses a moment in the doorway, aghast at the presence of old Filoon. Cliff glances at her, and she questions him with her eyes as to the meaning of the circumstance. But Cliff is oblivious of her consternation and simply turns back to the old man; whereupon Olly closes the door.*

FILOON

I went up there on the Lancaster County Letter Carriers' Excursion, in eighteen and eighty-two.

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, yes?

FILOON

Yes, use to raise lots of Hell in those days.

[*Olly is startled into a disapproving glare at the old man, and starts quietly across towards the right, hoping to reach the stairway without attracting Filoon's attention; but Cliff's remark arrests her, and she is obliged to stop and come forward a step or two between Miss Plunkett and the old man.*

CLIFF
This is my sister, Mrs. Kipax, Mr. Filoon.
[*Filoon turns.*
FILOON
Oh, yes. How do you do, Mrs. Pickaxe?
[*May, who is standing above the lady's chair at the right, resting her right hand upon the back of it, is obliged to turn away, to hide her amusement.*
OLLY (*with cold civility*)
How do you do?
[*She continues towards the stairs, the old man looking after her as though he were trying to read something at a great distance.*
FILOON
She's the fat one, ain't she?
[*Olly stops abruptly and turns, just long enough to give him a look of horrified indignation, then hurries on up the stairs.*
CLIFF
Yes, she's fatter than Laura.
FILOON
That's right. I know Laurie. That's Mrs. Fenner, ain't it?
CLIFF
That's right.
FILOON
Thin woman?
CLIFF
Yes, she's pretty thin.
FILOON
I know *her*. But I can't say that I'd reco'nize Mrs. Skipjack.
[*Miss Plunkett and May exchange amused looks.*

CLIFF

Well, she hasn't been over here much lately, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON

Like as not, that's the way. Haven't seen Mrs. Fenner, either, this good while back.

CLIFF

She's here now.

FILOON

That so? — I'd like to see her.

CLIFF AND FILOON (*speaking together*)

CLIFF: (*to May*) May, tell your Aunt Laura Mr. Filoon 'd like to see her.

FILOON: Don't think much about the home folks once they get a man of their own.

[*May goes out at the right.*

MISS PLUNKETT

Did you use to live in Harrisburg, Mr. Filoon?

FILOON

No, Ma'm, I lived in the city of Lancaster.

MISS PLUNKETT

Is that so?

FILOON

That's where I was first married. In the year eighteen and sixty-seven. Two years after the War of the Rebellion. Fifty-nine years ago. I was turned thirty-two years of age. And if I live till the twenty-eighth day of this coming August, I'll be ninety-one.

CLIFF

That's a very good age, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON

That's right, so it is. A cat at that age won't play with a whisk broom.

MISS PLUNKETT

And do you feel pretty well as a rule, Mr. Filoon?

[*May comes in again and resumes her place back of the lady's chair.*

FILOON

Wha' say?

MISS PLUNKETT

I say, do you get pretty good health, as a rule?

FILOON

All but the legs.

CLIFF

Do your legs bother you, Mr. Filoon?

FILOON

Won't carry me nowhere. (*To Miss Plunkett*) All shot to Hell.

CLIFF

That's too bad.

FILOON

Yes, that's where it shows, in the legs. But outside of that, — I'm as good as ever.

CLIFF

Well, that's fine.

FILOON

Yes, fit as a fiddle. Eat anything at all and sleep eight hours out of the twenty-four.

CLIFF

You're a wonder, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON

That's right; there ain't a many like me.

CLIFF

No, indeed, there aren't.

FILOON
Not many. What's your name, young woman?

MISS PLUNKETT
My name is Plunkett, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON
Plunkett?

MISS PLUNKETT
Yes. P–L–U–N–K–E– double T.

FILOON
Never heard of it.
[*He takes an old blue polka-dot handkerchief from the right pocket of his knit jacket.*

MISS PLUNKETT
Oh, there are lots of people by that name up that way, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON
Yes, lots of funny names up that way.

MISS PLUNKETT
Yes.

FILOON
Funny people, too.
[*He chuckles to himself.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*laughing*)
That's right.

FILOON
Are you a married lady, Miss Plunkett?

MISS PLUNKETT
No, I'm not, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON
Well, it's time you were, if you're going to be.
[*Mrs. Fenner enters at the right.*

CLIFF
Oh, Mr. Filoon wanted to see you, Laura.
FILOON
Is that Laurie?
CLIFF
Yes, *you* know Mrs. Fenner, Mr. Filoon.
FILOON
Yes. How do you do, Mrs. Fenner?
MRS. FENNER (*coldly*)
How do you do?
FILOON
I was just saying to your brother here that I haven't seen you now this good while back.
MRS. FENNER
I live over on the other side of town.
FILOON
Ah, yes, nice place — I've never been over that way.
MRS. FENNER
Don't you go out much nowadays, Mr. Filoon?
FILOON
Can't do it; the legs won't carry me.
MRS. FENNER
That's too bad.
FILOON
Yes, it's the legs that gives.
CLIFF
Well, I suppose something has to give out first, Mr. Filoon.
FILOON
That's right; something has to give out sometime, or we'd be here forever. (*He laughs a little, to himself; then speaks directly again to Mrs. Fenner*) Time for

mine to be giving out, Mrs. Fenner; ninety-one years old the twenty-eighth day of this coming August.

MRS. FENNER

That's quite a good age.

FILOON

That's right, quite a good age. See some changes in that time.

MRS. FENNER

Yes, indeed.

FILOON

I remember *you* when you was a little girl.

MRS. FENNER

Is that so?

FILOON

Yes, that's a good while ago. (*Mrs. Fenner bears with him*) You used to swing back and forth on the gate out here.

MRS. FENNER

Yes?

FILOON

Yes, I remember you. How old are you *now*, Mrs. Fenner?

MRS. FENNER (*trying to be pleasant*)

I'm as old as my little finger.

FILOON

Wha' say?

MRS. FENNER

I say, I'm old enough.

FILOON

Yes, you're gettin' along.

[*Mrs. Fenner gives an annoyed little sigh.*

CLIFF

I guess we're all doing that, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON
That's right. Your sister used to say that she wanted to see me live to be a hundred.

CLIFF
You mean Mrs. Phillips.

FILOON
Yes. The mother of the little fair-haired girl.

CLIFF
Yes, that was Lydy.

FILOON
Yes. Where is the little girl now?
[*Miss Plunkett passes May across in front of her towards Mr. Filoon.*

CLIFF (*indicating May*)
She's right here, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON
Ah, yes; I didn't see her. How are you, little girl?

MAY (*shaking hands with him, very respectfully*)
I'm very well, thank you, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON
That's good. Have you got a beau yet?
[*They all laugh.*

MAY
No, sir, I haven't.

FILOON
Well, you will have soon enough I guess, if you're anything like all the rest of them. Some fellow come along some day and wink at you, and away you'll go. That's the way it goes.
[*May touches her hair, with a shade of embarrassment, and moves back towards Miss Plunkett.*

CLIFF
You and Lydy were great friends, weren't you, Mr. Filoon?

FILOON
That's right; nice woman.

CLIFF
Yes, she was.

FILOON
Nicest of you all, I think.

CLIFF
Yes, I think she was.

FILOON
That's right, nice woman. (*Miss Plunkett whispers something to May and passes in front of her towards Filoon*) Big change around here without her, I guess.

CLIFF
Yes, indeed.

FILOON
I guess you'll have to be lookin' round for a wife now, won't you, Mr. Mettinger?

[*Cliff laughs.*

CLIFF
Well, I haven't thought much about that yet, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON
Well, don't think too long about it. Make some kind of a life for yourself. (*He looks around the room*) Nice home here; no use breaking it up. (*His eye lights on Miss Plunkett*) Here's a fine young woman all ready to step into it.

[*They all laugh, and May turns and looks at Mrs. Fenner.*

MISS PLUNKETT

Now, you mustn't wish anything like that on him, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON (*clapping his hat on at a rather rakish angle and getting up*)

Mustn't waste time. One woman's as good as another once you get used to her. (*He hangs his cane on his left arm and takes an old broken pipe from his pocket, striking it on the palm of his left hand and then blowing into it*) I've had three of them, (*he starts across in front of the table, towards the left*) and I'd have another if my legs 'd carry me far enough to find her.

CLIFF (*moving up towards the door*)

Most people don't think that way about marriage, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON

Shouldn't think too much about marriage at all; just go and do it. Chances of it turnin' out all right are just as good that way as if you thought of it from now till Kingdom Come.

CLIFF (*opening the door*)

Yes, I guess that's so, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON

Just as good, just as good. Well, good-by, young woman.

[*He touches his hat.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*moving towards the door, followed by May*)

Good-by, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON

I've got to get along; it's gettin' on to my bedtime.

MISS PLUNKETT

Come over again some time before I go.

[*Mrs. Fenner is distressed.*

FILOON (*touching his hat again*)

Thank you kindly, I will. (*He beckons her closer to him*) And set your cap for this man here, young woman; (*they all laugh*) good steady man.

CLIFF

Now, you mustn't be putting her up to any tricks, Mr. Filoon.

[*Filoon turns to him.*

FILOON

You'll need a woman around here now to look after things. No use wastin' time. (*He raises his finger with a touch of solemnity*) If you don't *put* somebody in, somebody'll *come* in. That's the way it goes. It's a wife's place, and she might as well be in it. Good night to you all.

[*He goes out, followed by Cliff.*

MAY, MISS PLUNKETT, AND CLIFF (*together*)

MAY: Good night.

MISS PLUNKETT: (*following him out*) Good night, Mr. Filoon.

CLIFF: Come over again sometime, Mr. Filoon.

FILOON

Thank you kindly, I will.

CLIFF

Can you find your way all right without your glasses?

[*May stands holding the door ajar, looking after them.*

FILOON (*outside*)

All right, yes. I'm not that far gone yet. My grandson took my specs into the city to-day to have them fixed.

[*Mrs. Fenner moves up to the windows at the back.*

CLIFF

Well, you'll be all right when you get them again.

MRS. FENNER

I suppose we'll have that as a steady thing now, — that your friend is here.

[*May turns from the door, closing it behind her, and, looking steadily at Mrs. Fenner, comes forward to the table.*

MAY

What?

MRS. FENNER

Why, that dreadful old man coming over here. I knew the first thing we'd know he'd be over here, when she spoke to him out there before dinner.

MAY

He's often been here before.

MRS. FENNER

When was he here?

MAY

Why, he used to come over and talk to Mama.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I never saw him, if he did.

MAY

Well, you weren't here much when Mama was here.

MRS. FENNER (*starting for the right door*)

Well, I hope he doesn't come over here again while *I'm* here.

MAY

Well, *you* don't have to see him, Aunt Laura.

MRS. FENNER (*stopping near the right door*)

I'll have to see him if I'm here when he comes.

[*May regards her steadily.*

MAY (*in a level tone*)

Well, you don't have to *be* here.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I think *somebody* needs to be here, by the looks of things.

MAY

Why?

MRS. FENNER

Why, to look after your Uncle Cliff, if for nothing else.

MAY (*moving to the back of the chair at the right of the table, and resting her left hand on the back of it*)

Why didn't you look after him all last month? — When he was here by himself.

MRS. FENNER

Well, you and your *friend* weren't here all last month.

MAY

Well, you certainly don't have to look after *us*, Aunt Laura; we can look after ourselves.

MRS. FENNER (*turning away*)

Oh, don't make me laugh, May.

MAY

I don't see anything to laugh about.

MRS. FENNER

Since when have *you* learned to look after yourself?

MAY

I've looked out for myself many a time. (*Mrs. Fenner is amused*) As many times, I'll bet, as your Ruth has.

MRS. FENNER

Well, it's news to me if you have.

MAY

Well, how would *you* know whether I've looked out for myself or not? You haven't been *in* this house in nearly four years.

MRS. FENNER

Well, if I haven't, I had good reason to stay out.

MAY

You make up reasons for things, Aunt Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Oh, I suppose you know all about it.

MAY

I know what Mama told me. And she said you were mad because she and I were living in a better house than the one you and Ruth were living in. (*Mrs. Fenner gives a little deprecatory laugh and crosses up to the windows at the back and glances out*) When I asked Daisy up here I told her that we were going to wait on ourselves; and that's the reason she came. And if I had known that you and Aunt Olly were going to be here, I wouldn't have asked her.

MRS. FENNER (*turning to her furiously*)

Well, it's too bad you *didn't* know we were going to be here.

MAY (*taking Mrs. Fenner's tone*)

Well, I *didn't* know it; and she's here. And Uncle Cliff said that if you and Aunt Olly can't wait on her without giving her a lot of funny looks, that we can get along very nicely without you.

[*Mrs. Fenner is slightly dismayed, then comes forward a step or two towards May.*

MRS. FENNER

I don't believe your Uncle Cliff said anything of the kind.

MAY

Well, *ask* him, when he comes in, if he didn't.

MRS. FENNER

And what did you *say* to your Uncle Cliff that *made* him say such a thing?

MAY

I told him about the way you and Aunt Olly were treating Daisy.

MRS. FENNER

And what have we been *doing* to Daisy?

MAY

You've been doing everything you *could* do to insult her.

MRS. FENNER

What?

MAY

Giving her a lot of funny looks; and the way you were looking at each other every time she spoke.

MRS. FENNER

Because we were embarrassed at the way she was carrying on.

MAY

She was only carrying on that way because of the way you two were acting. And you were acting that way before she started carrying on at all. You've been looking at each other ever since she came in that door; and Uncle Cliff says it's got to be stopped. And he says that if Daisy and I want to wait on ourselves, that that's the way it's got to be.

[*She starts for the door.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*from out at the left*)

Are you coming, May?

MAY (*opening the door*)

Yes, I'm coming, Daisy.

[*She goes out, slamming the door behind her. Mrs. Fenner stands perfectly still, thinking narrowly. After a dead pause, she steals over to the door and opens it quietly. Miss Plunkett laughs outside; and Mrs. Fenner closes*

the door just as quietly, and glides over to the upper window at the left. She draws the shade aside a little and looks out keenly. Olly comes down the stairs and stands looking at her sister for a second.

OLLY (*in a subdued tone*)

What's the matter?

[*Mrs. Fenner starts slightly and turns from the window, — coming forward at the left of the table.*

MRS. FENNER

When did *you* get back?

OLLY

A few minutes ago.

MRS. FENNER

You didn't take very much of a ride.

OLLY

I didn't take any at all.

MRS. FENNER

Why not?

OLLY

Because they went off and left me.

MRS. FENNER

Who did?

OLLY

Why, Ruth and her beau did.

MRS. FENNER

How did they happen to do that?

OLLY (*coming forward at the right of the lady's chair*)

Because they wanted to get rid of me I suppose.

[*She sits down, and rocks violently.*

MRS. FENNER (*crossing below the table to the middle of the room*)

Now, don't be imagining things, Olly.

OLLY

I'm not imagining things at all; I felt it the minute ever I got into the car. Ruth hardly spoke *two* words to me all the way over.

MRS. FENNER

Where did they leave you?

OLLY

At my house. I went in to get my things, — and when I came out they'd gone.

MRS. FENNER

Well, maybe they just rode round the block and were coming back for you.

OLLY (*very positively*)

No, they didn't do anything of the kind; for I waited at my door till I was tired; and then a neighbor of mine told me that they'd driven off the minute ever I got inside the door.

MRS. FENNER

Well, are you sure they understood that they were to wait for you?

OLLY

Of course they understood it; I was to go through the Park with them. But it was just a good chance to get rid of me, and they took it. (*She begins to cry*) And it isn't the first time that Ruth has done that kind of thing to me, either. But it's the last. I know where I'm wanted and where I'm not. When those two get hold of that car they think they own it. Nobody else has any rights. I had to come back here on the trolley.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I'm sure something must have happened, Olly, or Ruth would never have —

OLLY (*turning upon her furiously*)
Oh, don't uphold her, Laura!

MRS. FENNER
I'm not upholding her at all.

OLLY
Yes you are. And if she put my two eyes out, you'd uphold her.
[*Olly pokes her index finger towards Laura as though she were actually poking somebody's eyes out.*

MRS. FENNER (*raising her hand to silence her, and going up to the windows at the back*)
Sh — sh —

OLLY
I had a very good mind not to come back here at all.

MRS. FENNER (*glancing out*)
I imagine that would have just suited the people around here.

OLLY
Well, I had a good mind to do it, whether it would have suited them or not.

MRS. FENNER (*coming forward again to the middle of the room*)
May has just gotten through telling me that her Uncle Cliff said that if you and I couldn't be a bit more civil to Miss Plunkett, we could go home and stay there. (*Olly looks at her, startled*) That's what she told me.

OLLY
I don't believe her Uncle Cliff said anything of the kind.

MRS. FENNER
Of course he didn't say it, — she just made that up.
[*She turns away to the left and leans on the chair at the right of the table.*

OLLY

I don't believe her Uncle Cliff noticed *how* we were treating her.

MRS. FENNER (*over her shoulder, and looking toward the windows at the left*)

Neither do I. But I'm going to find out.

OLLY

Well, there's no use having any trouble with Cliff, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

I won't have any trouble with him; but I just want to find out whether or not he said it.

OLLY

If I thought he *did* say it, I wouldn't stay here five minutes.

[*She rises abruptly and hobbles to the mirror at the right, forward; and Mrs. Fenner whirls around.*

MRS. FENNER

What would you do? Walk out and leave the house to her — to do as she pleases?

OLLY

Well, it isn't *our* house, Laura; and if Cliff wants her here we certainly can't put her out.

MRS. FENNER

Well, we can stay around here, and see what's going on.

OLLY (*becoming extremely nettled*)

I don't know why Cliff should say a thing like that about me; *I* haven't been doing anything to the woman.

MRS. FENNER

Well, you've been doing as much as *I've* been doing, and he said it about me, too.

[*She turns away again, to the chair at the right of the table.*

OLLY (*crossing directly towards Mrs. Fenner*)
No, I have *not* been doing as much as you've been doing, Laura; (*Mrs. Fenner turns upon her*) now, *don't* tell a lie.

MRS. FENNER
You haven't been looking at her funny?

OLLY
I didn't look at her funny till you looked at her funny.

MRS. FENNER (*sitting down*)
You looked at her just as funny as I did.

OLLY
I wasn't even in the room when the woman came in.

MRS. FENNER
Well, you looked at her when you *came* in.

OLLY
Well, it was you that started to talk about her first, Laura; you must admit that.

MRS. FENNER
I know I did.

OLLY
And I defended her.

MRS. FENNER
Well, why did you run over home for your things, then?

OLLY
Because you told me to. (*Mrs. Fenner makes a sound of contemptuous amusement and turns away; and Olly starts to cry, moving towards the right*) You got me all upset, saying that she'd come here to marry Cliff.

MRS. FENNER
And don't you think that that's what she *did* come here for?

OLLY (*coming back to her*)
I don't know whether she did or not. (*Mrs. Fenner*

makes an impatient movement) And you don't, either. And I said that when you first mentioned it. (*Mrs. Fenner attempts to interrupt her but Olly stops her*) I remember distinctly saying that the woman may not have any such idea in her head.

MRS. FENNER

Ho!

OLLY

Well, even if she has, Laura, that is Cliff's business and not ours. And if he doesn't want us here, I think we're very, very foolish to stay.

[*She limps to the right to the mirror.*

MRS. FENNER

Well, I'm going to stay, whether I'm foolish or not.

OLLY

Well, I'm not.

MRS. FENNER

Well, nobody's holding you.

OLLY (*touching her hair at the mirror*)

I'm not in the habit of staying where I'm not wanted. (*She crosses back to Laura, extending her arm and lowering her voice*) And I think you're very short-sighted, Laura, if you have any trouble with Cliff. I don't think you can afford it any more than I can.

[*She starts for the stairway, crossing above the lady's chair.*

MRS. FENNER (*looking after her indignantly*)

You talk as though Cliff were keeping me.

OLLY (*turning and coming back a little, and speaking with great conviction*)

He's *helped* to keep you, Laura, many a time; you know that as well as I do.

[*She starts for the stairs again.*

MRS. FENNER

You don't know anything *about what* Cliff has done for me.

OLLY (*turning back to her again*)

I know what he's done for *me;* and I know that you're not the kind that would stand by and see it without getting the same for yourself. (*She starts away, then thinks of something else to say and comes back*) You live in a rented house; and you have a delicate husband; and your son is on his own, and your daughter is going to be married.

MRS. FENNER

How do you know that my daughter is going to be married?

OLLY

Never mind how I know it; she is, just the same.

MRS. FENNER (*feigning amusement*)

I don't know how you could know a thing that she doesn't know herself.

OLLY

But she does know it herself, and so do you.

MRS. FENNER

Do I?

OLLY

Yes, and I know it too, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I'd like to hear when it's going to be.

[*Olly lays her right hand on the back of the lady's chair and speaks in a very level tone.*

OLLY

Just as soon as Cliff's houses are finished, Laura, that's when it's going to be; for that's what you've all been

waiting for: in the hope that Cliff'll give them one as a wedding present. (*Mrs. Fenner turns away, laughing deprecatingly*) And between you and me, Laura, I think somebody'll need to give her something; for, from what I hear, this young man hasn't even got a job. But Ruth'll marry him, whether *you* like it or not; that's the reason, if I were you, I'd be wiser than to have any trouble with Cliff — for Ruth's sake, as well as your own.

[*She turns away, crossing directly to the stairway and goes up. And Mrs. Fenner sits perfectly still, thinking. She rests her elbow on the table and concentrates upon the situation. There is a pause; then the street door opens and Ruth comes in. Mrs. Fenner starts slightly and gets up, turning to Ruth.*

MRS. FENNER

Why didn't you wait for your Aunt Olly?

RUTH (*coming forward, in the middle of the room*)

When?

MRS. FENNER

Over at her house. She came back here a while ago perfectly furious that you'd driven away and left her.

RUTH

Why, we didn't understand that she expected us to wait for her.

MRS. FENNER

Well, evidently she did, for she said she waited at her house for you till she was tired, and then came back on the trolley.

RUTH (*removing her neckpiece*)

Why, we thought she was going in to pack her things.

MRS. FENNER
She said you knew perfectly well that she wanted to go for a drive with you, but that you just wanted to get rid of her.

RUTH (*going towards the right door*)
Oh, she's going out of her mind!

MRS. FENNER (*crossing over and up towards the stairway*)
Where's Charlie; putting the car away?

RUTH (*going out at the right door*)
Yes.

MRS. FENNER
Well, listen, Ruth — (*Ruth comes back into the room and her mother moves down towards her*) If I were you and Charlie, I'd keep out of sight till she goes, for she's in quite a temper.

RUTH
I should worry about her being in a temper.

MRS. FENNER
Well, don't have any words with her; just let her go.

RUTH
Is she upstairs?

MRS. FENNER (*moving back a step to glance up the stairs*)
Yes; she's getting her things, I imagine.

RUTH
Are the others up there too?

MRS. FENNER
No, they're back of the house here somewhere, taking a walk.

RUTH
I thought she was going to stay here for a while.

MRS. FENNER
She's changed her mind.

RUTH (*starting to the door again*)
Well, I'm glad she has. (*Turning suddenly to her mother*) You know, she doesn't want to ride in that car, anyway, Mama, when the top is up; for she kept pestering Charlie all the way over to know if he couldn't put the top down. She thinks she looks good in that black veil and she wants people to see her.

MRS. FENNER (*lifting her hand to silence her*)
Sh — sh.

RUTH (*going out*)
I don't care whether she hears me or not.

MRS. FENNER
Ruth —

RUTH
What?

MRS. FENNER (*beckoning to her with her finger*)
Come here. (*Ruth comes in again, and Mrs. Fenner lays her hand on her arm and speaks in a very confidential tone*) She told me here a minute ago that she knew all about you going to be married.

RUTH
She doesn't know anything of the kind, Mama.

MRS. FENNER
And she said she knew *when* you were going to be married, too.

RUTH
She's just looking for information.

MRS. FENNER
Well, the funny part of it was, Ruth, that she hit it about right.

RUTH
What did she say?

MRS. FENNER

She said you'd be married whenever your Uncle Cliff's houses were finished; that that's what you were waiting for.

RUTH

Had you been saying anything to her?

MRS. FENNER

Not one single word. But she seemed to know all about it.

RUTH

What made her change her mind about staying over here? Just because we didn't wait for her?

MRS. FENNER

No, it was something that May said to me here a while ago, and I was telling *her*.

RUTH

What was it?

MRS. FENNER

Something about her Uncle Cliff not being satisfied with the way we were treating Miss Plunkett.

RUTH

You and Aunt Olly?

MRS. FENNER

Yes.

RUTH

When did he say it?

MRS. FENNER

She said a while ago. So I was telling your Aunt Olly about it when she came in, and she got very indignant and said she wouldn't stay where she wasn't wanted.

RUTH

I wonder what it was Uncle Cliff said.

MRS. FENNER (*turning to the lady's chair and looking toward the left windows*)
I don't know. But I'm going to try to find out.

RUTH
He may not have said anything at all.

MRS. FENNER
That's what *I* think. I think May just made it up, or this other one put her up to it.

RUTH
Well, don't *you* say anything to Uncle Cliff about it, Mama.

MRS. FENNER
Oh, I won't.

RUTH (*calculatingly*)
We don't want to start anything with him.

MRS. FENNER
But I'd just like to know if he *did* say anything, and *how* he happened to say it.

RUTH
Charlie and I talked to him to-night.
[*Mrs. Fenner turns sharply and looks at her.*

MRS. FENNER
To Cliff?

RUTH
Yes.

MRS. FENNER
When?

RUTH
Right after dinner.

MRS. FENNER
Did you say anything about the houses?

RUTH

Yes. So there's no use *spoiling* everything.

[*There is a sound at the head of the stairs, and Mrs. Fenner motions Ruth to withdraw. Ruth goes out at the right, and, with a glance up the stairs, Mrs. Fenner follows her. Olly comes down the stairs, comes forward to the mirror, puts her satchel down, glances out through the right door, and then drapes her mourning veil a trifle more dramatically over her right shoulder. Then she picks up the satchel, and, with another glance toward the right door, starts over and up across the center of the room to the street door. Miss Plunkett breezes in.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*crossing directly to the stairway*)

I've got to get something for my shoulders; it's too chilly for me out there.

OLLY

Yes, it is a bit chilly this evening.

MISS PLUNKETT

Are you leaving town, Olly?

OLLY

No, dear; I'm going home.

MISS PLUNKETT (*stopping at the foot of the stairs*)

Do you want me to tell May and Cliff that you're going when I go out?

OLLY (*with her hand on the door knob*)

No, it isn't necessary, dear, thanks; I'll be over again in a day or two.

MISS PLUNKETT (*going up the stairs*)

Be sure you come over before I go, Olly.

OLLY (*softening*)

Yes, I'll be over.

MISS PLUNKETT

I mustn't get away without seeing *you* again.

[*Olly melts completely, and comes back a step or two.*

OLLY

No, I'll be over again. (*She laughs faintly, looks toward the right door, then comes to a decision. She crosses directly to the foot of the stairs and calls up*) Oh, Miss Plunkett —

MISS PLUNKETT (*from upstairs*)

Yes?

OLLY

Miss Plunkett, if you and May should want to go any place while you're here — (*Mrs. Fenner appears in the right door and stands regarding her stonily*) — I'll be only too delighted to come over and look after things for you, if you'll just give me a call.

MISS PLUNKETT

Thanks, Olly; that'll be grand.

OLLY

I haven't so very much to do these days.

[*She laughs a little and sidles forward, then becomes conscious of Mrs. Fenner's icy gaze. Her laughter freezes, and, after holding Mrs. Fenner's eye for a second, she starts across in front of the lady's chair and up towards the street door. She just reaches the middle of the room when Snyder bursts in. She stops dead.*

SNYDER (*holding the door open*)

Oh, did you just get here, Mrs. Kipax? (*She sails across to the door, looking at him from a great height, and goes out*) We might have stopped for you on the way over if we'd thought you'd be —

[*His voice dies away as he becomes aware of Olly's attitude.*

He looks after her, then at Mrs. Fenner; then, dropping the corners of his mouth in a wry smile, which Mrs. Fenner reflects, closes the door.

MRS. FENNER (*crossing up to the windows at the back*)
Ruth says if you got the ice cream, Charlie, to bring it out to her.

SNYDER (*tossing his hat on to the table and crossing below the lady's chair to the right door*)
All right. I got a quart and a pint: I thought that'd be enough.
[*He goes out.*

MRS. FENNER
Oh, plenty. She'll put it on the ice out there till Cliff and the rest of them come in.
[*She watches Olly down the street, then turns and looks straight out, thinking. She glances toward the left windows, then toward the stairs, then thinks again. Miss Plunkett can be heard coming down the stairs; so she turns suddenly to the windows again and pretends to be looking out.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*stepping forward to the mirror to arrange her light, fancy shawl*)
I had to come in for something to put around my shoulders.

MRS. FENNER (*turning from the windows and coming forward slowly at the left of the lady's chair*)
Yes, I've been thinking about you being out there with nothing around you.

MISS PLUNKETT (*crossing above the lady's chair towards the door*)
It's awfully chilly out there along the water.

MRS. FENNER (*with a touch of meekness, and sitting in the lady's chair*)

I was going to bring you out something.

[*The curtain commences to descend slowly. Miss Plunkett glances over her right shoulder at Mrs. Fenner and continues to the door. She opens the door quietly, and, looking suspiciously at Mrs. Fenner, glides out, drawing the door slowly to after her. Mrs. Fenner rocks back and forth, meekly.*

THE CURTAIN IS DOWN

ACT III

Two weeks later, in the evening.

Mrs. Fenner comes in from the street and glances around. She crosses to the right door, then steps up to the foot of the stairs and listens. Olly appears in the right door, wearing an apron.

MRS. FENNER (*moving towards the chair at the right of the table*)

Hello.

OLLY

Hello.

MRS. FENNER

What have they got you *doing*, working?

OLLY

No, I was here for dinner, and Cliff wanted to take May and Miss Plunkett over to see the new houses before it got dark, so I said I'd stay and clean up.

MRS. FENNER (*sitting down*)

I thought she was going home last Monday.

OLLY
So she was; but Cliff said May felt so bad that he persuaded her to stay.

MRS. FENNER
I guess it was easy to persuade her.

OLLY (*glancing toward the stairs*)
They're upstairs, — they just came back a few minutes ago. Cliff is putting the car away.

MRS. FENNER
I should think you'd have more spirit, Olly, than to come over here when you were *told* you weren't wanted.

OLLY
Well, you're over here, Laura.

MRS. FENNER
Well, I'm not over here to work, I can promise you that.

OLLY
Well, nobody asked me to work either; I did it of my own accord.

MRS. FENNER
Well, why did you come over here at all, while she was here?

OLLY (*moving over towards Laura*)
Because I am not going to stay out of Cliff's house, Laura, for her or you or anybody else.

MRS. FENNER
They were so anxious to wait on themselves, I'd have let them do it.

OLLY
They *have* been doing it; May says Miss Plunkett has cooked every meal since she's been in the house; and Cliff says she's a wonderful cook. (*Mrs. Fenner gives a*

hard little laugh) I know she made a perfectly delicious dinner here this evening, and I helped to eat it.

MRS. FENNER

Oh, I wasn't mistaken in her; she knew how to win you all over.

OLLY

Well, there's no use parting bad friends with her, Laura; and having trouble with Cliff at the same time.

[*She moves back towards the stairs.*

MRS. FENNER

You won't part with her, Olly, don't make any mistake about that.

OLLY

She's going to-morrow.

MRS. FENNER

Ruth said she said that *last* week, and she's still here. And she'll keep right *on* being here, if she gets any encouragement; remember what I'm telling you.

OLLY

Well, that's up to Cliff, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

But, what *I* resent is that she should be able to walk into my mother's house and do as she pleases.

OLLY

Oh, it's been a long time, Laura, since this was Mother's house.

MRS. FENNER

It'll always be Mother's house, as far as I'm concerned.

OLLY

It's only a house, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Well, you have no sentiment.

OLLY (*going over close to Laura*)

Yes, I have too. But if Cliff marries, somebody'll have to come into it, — unless he decides to live in one of the new ones; and I don't think he'll do that, for he's attached to this house. And from what I've seen of *her*, Cliff might go further and do worse.

MRS. FENNER

You've changed your tune considerably in the last two weeks.

OLLY

No, I haven't at all; I'm simply not prejudiced against her.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I am.

OLLY

I was here three times last week, (*Mrs. Fenner makes a sound of bitter amusement*) and she was busy every minute of the time.

MRS. FENNER

She knows what she's doing.

OLLY

She has that upstairs just shining. And she made May a white dress last week that I think is the prettiest dress she's ever had. She has it on to-night.

MRS. FENNER

She'll be a lovely stepmother for May, I must say. She'll soon have her as common as herself.

OLLY

I don't think Miss Plunkett is common.

MRS. FENNER

You don't think a person with that laugh is common?

OLLY

Not necessarily, no.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I'd like to know what your idea of commonness is, then.

OLLY

I think she's just free with people.

MRS. FENNER

She's free and easy, Olly, — it's in her face. (*Olly glances toward the stairs, then moves over towards them*) The idea of calling people by their first names the minute she meets them. She'd be a nice one to have to introduce to anybody.

OLLY

Well, now, you may not *have* to introduce her to anybody, Laura; they're not married yet.

MRS. FENNER

They *will* be, if she can manage it. I felt it the minute ever I heard she was coming here. And when I heard her laugh, I was sure of it. People are not called *Daisy* for nothing.

OLLY

I saw Ruth's marriage license in the paper yesterday.

MRS. FENNER

Yes, it was in.

OLLY

When are they going to be married?

MRS. FENNER

Next Wednesday. That's what I wanted to see Cliff about. They're not going to have any wedding; they want to do it as inexpensively as possible.

OLLY
Where are they going to live, Laura, with you?
MRS. FENNER (*picking up her bag from the table*)
For a while, I suppose, till they decide. Is there any hot tea out there? I've got a bit of a headache.
OLLY (*turning and going out the right door*)
No, but I can make some in a minute.
MRS. FENNER (*rising and going towards the right door*)
I've been so upset these past two weeks that I've had a headache every day.
[*She goes out.*
OLLY (*out at the right*)
Cliff ought to be in any minute. May said he just went round to put the car away.
[*May comes running down the stairs and over to the middle of the room. She glances at the table, then turns and looks at the piano.*
MAY
Yes, it's down here, Daisy.
[*She goes to the piano and picks up Miss Plunkett's pocketbook.*
MISS PLUNKETT (*from upstairs*)
All right, dear.
MAY
You left it on the piano. (*Cliff enters from the street*) Do you want it, Daisy?
MISS PLUNKETT (*coming down the stairs*)
No, dear, I just thought maybe I left it in the car.
MAY (*turning to her Uncle Cliff*)
Daisy thinks the houses are wonderful, Uncle Cliff.
CLIFF
That so?

MAY
She's crazy about them.
CLIFF (*handing May his hat*)
Take this out and hang it up, will you, May?
[*She takes the hat and then turns to Daisy with the pocketbook.*
MAY
This is awfully heavy, Daisy; you must have a lot of money in it.
MISS PLUNKETT
It's all pocketbook, dear, I've been on a vacation for a month.
[*May passes above her and goes out at the right.*
CLIFF (*lighting a cigar*)
There was money paid down on some of those houses, Daisy, before they were even started.
[*He sits down at right of the table.*
MISS PLUNKETT (*coming down at the left of the lady's chair and sitting down*)
Well, houses are pretty scarce these days, Cliff, and those are very nice.
CLIFF
Yes, I think they make a nice-looking house.
MAY (*out at the right*)
Do you want the paper, Uncle Cliff?
CLIFF
Yes, give it to me, May, I want to see something there.
MAY (*entering, and crossing above Miss Plunkett*)
Daisy says she likes this house better than the new ones, Uncle Cliff. Didn't you, Daisy?
[*She gives him the paper.*

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, that's because I like an old-fashioned house. Come here a minute, dear.

[*May comes to her and she turns her round and fixes something at the hem of her skirt in the back.*

CLIFF

I do too, personally; but most people like them more up to date.

MISS PLUNKETT

That's all right. There's something set and sensible-looking to me about an old-fashioned house. It looks as though it's been in the business of living a long time.

MAY

Do you live in an old-fashioned house, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

I grew up in one; but I live in a couple of rooms over my store, now.

MAY

All by yourself?

MISS PLUNKETT

All by myself. Nobody to boss me.

MAY

Don't you ever get lonesome?

MISS PLUNKETT

Sometimes; but I've got too much to do to think about it.

MAY

Daisy says she thinks this house is very restful, Uncle Cliff.

MISS PLUNKETT

Don't bother him; he's reading.

MAY
Well, I was just telling him what you said.
MISS PLUNKETT
Well, he doesn't want to hear everything I say.
MAY
Well, he'd like to hear that, for Uncle Cliff loves this house.
MISS PLUNKETT
Well, you do too, don't you?
MAY
Yes, I love it.
MISS PLUNKETT
You wouldn't find many like it if you went looking for one.
MAY
Which do you like best, your room or mine?
MISS PLUNKETT
I like them both best.
MAY (*laughing, and putting her arm around Miss Plunkett's shoulder*)
You can never get you to say anything.
MISS PLUNKETT
Well, if I said I liked mine best, you'd want it.
MAY
Oh, I would not, Daisy.
MISS PLUNKETT
And if I said I liked yours best, you'd want to give it to me.
[*May laughs.*
MAY
Well, isn't there any room in the house you like better than the others?

MISS PLUNKETT
Yes, I like this room best.
MAY
This room here?
MISS PLUNKETT
Yes; this room's my idea of a good time. (*May laughs*) I think if I were dying and they let me sit in this room for fifteen minutes, I'd come to again.
MAY
You were tired yesterday, Daisy, when we got in from town.
MISS PLUNKETT
I was dead.
MAY
I was awfully tired too.
MISS PLUNKETT
Well, it's no wonder; we were in nearly every store in the city looking for that lace.
MAY
Pretty nearly every one.
MISS PLUNKETT
But after I sat in this room for a while I was as fresh as a daisy.
MAY (*laughing*)
Well, you *are* a daisy, Daisy.
MISS PLUNKETT
Kind of an old daisy, though.
MAY
Oh, you are not, Daisy.
MISS PLUNKETT
Oh, I am so, Daisy.
[*May laughs.*

MAY
Why, I think you're nice looking, Daisy.
MISS PLUNKETT
Now, listen, dear, I told you that pocketbook was all flattened out, so it's no use.
MAY
Don't *you* think she is, Uncle Cliff?
MISS PLUNKETT
Now, what are you trying to do; start something?
CLIFF
What did you say, May?
MISS PLUNKETT
Don't pay any attention to her, Cliff.
MAY
I say, don't you think Daisy's nice looking? (*He looks at Miss Plunkett and laughs*) She says she isn't.
CLIFF
What am I supposed to say to that, Daisy?
MISS PLUNKETT
Well, don't say anything too sudden, Cliff, for I'm sitting in an antique here, and if I go over backwards, it's all off.
[*Cliff laughs.*
MAY
Don't you, Uncle Cliff?
CLIFF
Why, yes, — I think Daisy's very nice looking.
MISS PLUNKETT
Now, don't kid me, Cliff, because I'm from Harrisburg.
CLIFF
Sure I do.

MAY
Now, see.

MISS PLUNKETT
Let the man read his paper. And go and play me something on the piano, like a nice child.

MAY (*going to the piano*)
What do you want me to play?

MISS PLUNKETT
I don't care, anything at all. (*May settles herself at the piano, and Cliff turns the page of the newspaper. Miss Plunkett glances over at him*) That must be a good cigar you're smoking, Cliff.

CLIFF
It's a Corona.

MISS PLUNKETT
I love the smell of a good cigar.

CLIFF
I always smoke these.

[*He resumes his reading, and May goes very softly into "Chanson Triste." Miss Plunkett sits looking away off, listening to the music. Gradually her eyes wander to Cliff, then she turns herself all the way around and looks at May. She sits very still for a pause, then feels in the pocket of her dress for a handkerchief. She turns back again, and, touching her handkerchief to her eyes, sits rocking herself back and forth, quietly weeping. Presently May happens to glance at her, and it dawns on her that Miss Plunkett is weeping. She stops playing quietly, gets up, and, with a glance at Cliff, comes forward softly at Miss Plunkett's left.*

MAY (*in a lowered tone*)
Are *you* crying, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT (*hastily using handkerchief*)
No, of course I'm not crying, — what would I be crying about?

MAY
Oh, you are so, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT
I always cry when I hear music, May.

MAY
I wouldn't have played if I thought it would make you cry.

MISS PLUNKETT (*getting up*)
I love to cry, darling, — I'm having a grand time.
[*She laughs weakly.*

MAY
Don't cry, Daisy, — I don't like to see you cry.

MISS PLUNKETT
Well, I'm not crying now, dear, I'm laughing. (*She laughs strangely, holds May close to her, then breaks away suddenly*) I must go upstairs and pack, dear.

MAY (*following her towards the stairs*)
Oh, I can't bear to think of you going, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT (*coming back to the chair for her pocketbook*)
I've got to go sometime, Kid; I can't stay here forever. I've been here now a week longer than I said I would.
[*She hurries back to the foot of the stairs.*

MAY
You could stay here, Daisy, if you lived here.

MISS PLUNKETT
But I don't live here, child; I live in Harrisburg.

MAY
But you said you didn't *like* Harrisburg.

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, nobody likes Harrisburg, dear, but if a person's business is there he's got to stay there.

MAY (*turning away and starting to cry*)

Well, I think it's terrible for you to go.

MISS PLUNKETT (*stepping to May's side*)

Now, you said you wouldn't do that, May, if I stayed the last time you asked me.

MAY

Well, I can't help it, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT (*starting abruptly for the stairs*)

Come upstairs and help me pack.

MAY

No, I won't help you pack.

[*Miss Plunkett goes up the stairs, and May sits down in the lady's chair and cries.*

After a second Cliff looks sharply over at her.

CLIFF

What's the matter, May? (*May cries harder, and Cliff rises suddenly and crosses to her*) What's the matter, Kiddie? What is it?

MAY

Daisy's going away to-morrow.

CLIFF

Is she going to-morrow?

MAY

That's what she said; she's gone upstairs to pack.

CLIFF

Well, now, you know she has to go sometime, May.

MAY

I don't see why she should.

CLIFF

Why, she's got a business to tend to, May; she can't neglect that.

MAY

It'll be terribly lonesome in this house when she goes. We won't have any fun any more.

CLIFF

Well, she can't stay here forever, May; you know that as well as I do.

MAY

I don't see why she couldn't; we've got lots of room.

CLIFF

But Daisy lives in Harrisburg, May.

MAY

But she doesn't *like* Harrisburg, Uncle Cliff, for she says so. She says *nobody* could like it.

CLIFF

Well, it's her home, May, whether she likes it or not.

MAY

She *hasn't* any home, Uncle Cliff; she says she lives in two rooms, all by herself. And she loves this house. She says when she hears the rain on those trees outside her window upstairs, she says she wants to pass right out of the picture.

CLIFF (*amused, and moving back towards the table*)

Well, I don't know how we're going to keep her here for you, May.

MAY

I think she'd stay if *you'd* ask her; (*he turns and looks at her*) she stayed the last time you asked her.

CLIFF (*coming back*)

But it isn't fair to ask her again, May; she's stayed a week longer already than she intended to.

MAY

I mean to ask her to stay here all the time.

CLIFF

Now, I can't do that, May; Daisy has a business to look after.

MAY

Well, other people have businesses too, and they go to live in other places.

CLIFF

They don't unless they're going to get married or something.

MAY

Well, why couldn't Daisy get married; *you* could marry her. (*Cliff laughs*) Why couldn't you?

CLIFF

Well, there's no reason why I couldn't; but I thought you didn't *want* me to get married; you always said so.

MAY

I wouldn't mind if it was Daisy. Old Mr. Filoon says you ought to marry Daisy, and he ought to know; he's over ninety years old.

CLIFF

But Daisy doesn't *want* to get married, May.

MAY

How do you know?

CLIFF

She said so, — the night she came here. She said she was a free woman and that was the way she was going to stay.

MAY

I don't think she knew then that she'd like it so well here. Will *I* ask her?

CLIFF

Ask her what, May?

MAY

If she'd stay if *you'd* marry her?

CLIFF (*startled, and moving towards the stairs, to assure himself that Miss Plunkett is not within hearing*)

No, of course you won't, May; you mustn't ask Daisy anything like that.

MAY

Why not?

CLIFF (*coming forward again, in the middle of the room*)

Because you mustn't. If Daisy's going to be asked anything like that, *I'm* the one that must ask her.

MAY

Well, will you?

CLIFF

I don't know whether I will or not, May; you can't just go and *ask* a person a thing like that — you've got to think about it.

MAY

Old Mr. Filoon says you *shouldn't* think about it; he says you ought to just go and do it. And *he's* been married *three times.*

CLIFF

Well, maybe he wouldn't have done it so often if he'd thought a little more about it.

MAY

Well, he says he'd do it again, only for his legs. (*Cliff*

laughs and turns away) So it couldn't have been so terrible.

[*Mrs. Fenner comes in from the right.*

MRS. FENNER

Hello, Cliff.

CLIFF

Hello, Laura.

[*He moves over towards the upper window at the left.*

MRS. FENNER

Hello, May.

MAY (*rising*)

Hello.

[*She goes quickly up the stairs.*

CLIFF

I didn't know *you* were over here.

MRS. FENNER (*looking keenly after May*)

I've just been getting some tea out there; I'd a bit of a headache. (*She moves over and down to the chair at the right of the table*) What's the matter with May?

CLIFF (*turning from the window and crossing to the foot of the stairs, thoughtfully*)

Oh, she's all broken up because Miss Plunkett is going home to-morrow.

MRS. FENNER (*sitting down*)

Is Miss Plunkett still here?

CLIFF

Yes, May wanted her to stay a little longer.

MRS. FENNER

I *thought* she only intended to stay a week.

CLIFF (*abstractedly, looking up the stairs*)

Yes, that's all she did intend to stay when she came.

[*There is a pause, then Mrs. Fenner glances at Cliff, under her eyelids.*

MRS. FENNER

What are you thinking about, Cliff; something troubling you?

CLIFF (*turning, with an attempt at casualness*)

No. (*He drifts to the right alcove window at the back*) I was just trying to reason with May about Miss Plunkett going home.

MRS. FENNER

What does she *want* her to do, stay here forever?

CLIFF

That's what she'd like, I think.

MRS. FENNER

She'd soon get tired of that I'm afraid. (*There is a pause; then Cliff turns slowly from the window and looks thoughtfully up the stairs. He thinks for a second, then shifts his gaze straight ahead and appears to be weighing some problem in his mind*) There's something I want to talk to you about, Cliff, before anybody comes in. (*He moves down to the center of the room*) Ruth and Charlie will be over after a bit, but I thought I'd like to talk to you before *they* do. I suppose you know, of course, that they're going to be married.

CLIFF

Yes, they said something about it one night here a couple of weeks ago.

MRS. FENNER

Yes, Ruth told me she was going to tell you.

CLIFF

What does he *do* for a living, Laura?

MRS. FENNER

Why, he's a chemist, I believe, by profession; at least, that's what he was studying when he came down here.

CLIFF

Doesn't he belong in this city?

MRS. FENNER

No, he's from Syracuse. He came down here two summers ago and ran a taxicab, to help him through his schooling, you know. I suppose he thought there'd be more work in a place like this. And he never went back: he said he figured if he could get something in his line here in town that the practical experience would be more valuable to him than the schooling.

CLIFF

Is he still down at the Allied Chemical?

MRS. FENNER

No, I understood Ruth to say that he'd left there, about a month ago. He says that there are so many young men there that the chances of advancement are very slight. And he's terribly ambitious.

CLIFF

What's he doing now?

MRS. FENNER

Why, I haven't asked Ruth *what* he's been doing lately; but I'm sure he's doing something, for he's very much of a hustler — He's had some awfully good positions since he's been here.

CLIFF (*crossing to the left upper window*)

Well, he'd better hold on to one of them, Laura, if he's thinking about getting married and buying a house.

MRS. FENNER

Well, he's very sensible about it; and so is Ruth. She

was saying only the other night, when she was talking to me about it, that she wouldn't think of giving up her position, even if she were married, till Charlie got absolutely settled.

CLIFF (*turning to her*)

Why doesn't she wait till he *gets* settled before she marries him?

MRS. FENNER

Well, you know the way girls *are*, Cliff.

CLIFF (*crossing over to the right door*)

She ought to have better sense than to be talking about buying a house when he hasn't even got a job.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I said that to them myself.

CLIFF

You can't buy houses on talk, you know.

MRS. FENNER

Well, Ruth has always been so terribly opposed to the idea of paying rent. She wanted her father and me to buy that house of *ours* three years ago; but, as I said to her, "Ruth, who's going to pay for it?" I said, "Your father is nearly sixty, and not very well, at that, and," I said, "the first I know *you'll* be getting married; and then who's to pay for the house?"

CLIFF

Why, those single houses of mine are selling for twelve thousand dollars apiece; and it was one of those they were talking to me about.

MRS. FENNER

They're crazy about those houses; I've never seen the beat of it.

CLIFF
Has *he* got any money?
MRS. FENNER
Charlie Snyder, you mean?
CLIFF
Yes.
MRS. FENNER
I don't know anything about that, Cliff, whether he has or not. But Ruth has a little; and she'd like to put it down on a house. She says she cannot see the sense of paying rent all your life and having nothing at the finish.
[*Ruth enters from the street, followed by Snyder, smoking a cigarette.*
RUTH (*crossing to the piano, removing her fur*)
Hello, Uncle Cliff.
CLIFF
Hello, Ruth.
SNYDER (*closing the door*)
Good evening, Mr. Mettinger.
[*Snyder tosses his hat on to the sofa at the left as he comes forward.*
RUTH
Where's May?
CLIFF
She's upstairs, helping Miss Plunkett to pack.
RUTH
Is Miss Plunkett still here?
CLIFF
Yes, she's going home to-morrow.
RUTH (*moving back to the middle of the room*)
I thought she'd gone long ago. Sit down, Charlie.
[*Snyder leans against the lower arm of the sofa.*

MRS. FENNER
I was just talking to your Uncle Cliff here, Ruth, about what we were talking about.

RUTH (*very cordially*)
What do you think about it, Uncle Cliff?

CLIFF
Well, I can't say that I think much about it, Ruth.

RUTH
Why not?

CLIFF
Because I don't think it's good business.

[*Snyder straightens up and comes a step or two nearer the table.*

SNYDER
Do you think it's wise to be too businesslike about marriage, Mr. Mettinger?

CLIFF
That depends on the circumstances. But I think it's only fair to give a thought to the business end of it, for if you don't, somebody else's got to.

RUTH
Well, why don't you think this is good business, Uncle Cliff?

CLIFF
Because, from what I understand, the young man there hasn't even got a job.

SNYDER
I'm taking a job Monday.

CLIFF
And how long are you going to keep it?

SNYDER
That depends on the job, I suppose.

CLIFF

I understand that you've taken quite a *few* jobs since you've been here.

SNYDER

Well, there wasn't any particular future in any of them that *I* could see.

CLIFF

I don't think there's any particular future in any job unless you stay long enough at it to make one. If the two of you are so set on getting married, I can't see why you don't go in and live with Ruth's mother for a while, 'til things get going for you. That's a pretty big house, and there'd only be the four of you.

MRS. FENNER

Well, Ruth doesn't seem to want to do that.

RUTH

Well, you said you didn't want it either, Mama.

MRS. FENNER

Because I think it's a mistake for young couples to go in to live with other people. Besides, you've always said you hated that house.

RUTH

I know I did; I *never* liked it.

CLIFF

Well, it doesn't seem to me, Ruth, that it's a question of what you like or dislike, it's what you've got to *do*. Those houses of mine are selling at twelve thousand apiece, and I'd like to know how you're going to make payments on a debt like that, and keep it going in the meantime, when you haven't even got a job.

RUTH

But I have got a job, Uncle Cliff.

CLIFF

And what are you going to do, stick at it after you're married?

RUTH

Well, I thought of staying at it for a while, till Charlie gets started. (*Cliff makes a little sound of amusement, and goes up to the piano*) Why, I know lots of girls, Uncle Cliff, that have stayed at their positions after they married.

CLIFF (*turning to her*)

I'm surprised at you, Ruth. I thought you had better sense. Taking a burden like that on your shoulders and not a chance in the world of meeting it.

[*He moves forward at the right.*

RUTH

I think if people absolutely know they've *got* to meet a thing, they manage to do it some way.

CLIFF (*impatiently, and raising his voice*)

How are you going to *do* it, Ruth, when *he* hasn't even got a job!

RUTH

But he *has* a job, Uncle Cliff; he starts at it on Monday.

CLIFF

What job has he got?

RUTH

Tell him about it, Charlie.

SNYDER

It's a proposition that the Stoddard Transportation Company is putting on the market.

CLIFF

What kind of a proposition?

SNYDER
It's a collapsible barrel.
CLIFF
A collapsible what?
RUTH
Barrel.
SNYDER
A collapsible barrel; for the transportation of fluid commodities to shipping centers.
CLIFF
And, what do they want it to collapse for?
SNYDER (*getting mad*)
They don't want it to collapse at all, till it's emptied.
[*He turns away.*
RUTH
Now, don't get mad, Charlie.
SNYDER
No, but he's treating the thing as though it was a joke.
CLIFF
I don't know anything about what it is; that's why I'm asking you.
SNYDER
Well, I'm trying to tell you, if you'll cut out the kidding.
CLIFF
What happens after the barrel collapses?
[*Snyder looks at him before replying.*
SNYDER
They can remit it to the shippers, without taking up any space.
CLIFF
What is it, a patent of some kind?

SNYDER

Yes. A fellow in Brooklyn had the idea; and the Stoddard Transportation Company bought it from him.

CLIFF

And, what are you going to do, go out and try to sell it?

SNYDER

I'm going to try to sell stock in it. (*Cliff's interest relaxes*) I know a couple of fellows that are cleaning up on it, on a straight commission salary.

CLIFF (*turning to him sharply*)

And what if you find there's no future in that for you? — What about the payments on the house then?

SNYDER

Well, I'm not talking about buying any houses, Mr. Mettinger; it's Ruth that's talking about that.

CLIFF

You'd *live* in the house, though, wouldn't you?

SNYDER

I'd expect to live with my wife, naturally.

CLIFF

And I'd be expected to keep a roof over you till you'd find a job —

CLIFF AND SNYDER (*speaking together*)

CLIFF: And Ruth would have to keep you.

SNYDER: Oh, no, you wouldn't be expected to do anything of the kind.

CLIFF (*swinging down the middle of the room and over to the right*)

That's a hell of an arrangement.

SNYDER

Nobody has to keep me.

MRS. FENNER
Keep quiet, Charlie.

SNYDER
Don't get wrong on that.

CLIFF
What else would it amount to?

SNYDER
I haven't spent any nights in the Park so far.

RUTH (*crossing towards Cliff*)
Listen, Uncle Cliff; Charlie's perfectly right in saying I'm the one that talked about the house.

CLIFF AND SNYDER (*speaking together*)
CLIFF: Listen, Ruth — there's no use saying anything more about it.
[*He goes down to the right again.*
SNYDER: (*swinging up to the door, snatching his hat from the sofa as he goes*) Ha! That's the best laugh I've had since I left Syracuse.

RUTH (*rushing towards Snyder*)
Where are you going, Charlie?

CLIFF
The whole thing is too silly to talk about.

SNYDER
I'm going to get out of here.

RUTH
Now, don't be silly, dear; listen to *me*.

MRS. FENNER
Listen, Charlie.

SNYDER
What do you expect me to do, stand here and let him bawl me out?

[*Olly appears in the right door and looks wonderingly at the scene.*

RUTH

Uncle Cliff didn't mean anything by that.

SNYDER

You might think *I* had to sit out in the alley till *he* gave me a house.

RUTH

Well, he didn't understand, dear, that I'm the one that's been talking about the house.

SNYDER

Well, I wouldn't let you live in one of his houses, now, if he gave it to you. (*Cliff laughs*) No, I wouldn't. I had a house to live in before I ever saw this burg.

CLIFF (*sternly*)

Well, I think you'd better write home for it, boy, if you intend to settle around here.

SNYDER (*coming forward to the table*)

Well, I may not *settle* around here, Mr. Mettinger, what do you think of that?

[*He starts for the door again.*

CLIFF

Fine! I think it'd be a good idea.

SNYDER (*opening the door*)

Come on here, Ruth.

RUTH

Where are you going, Charlie?

SNYDER

That's *my* business.

[*He goes out, slamming the door after him. Ruth turns and rushes to the piano for her fur, and her mother breaks*

into a little laugh of amusement and rises. Olly fades through the right door.

MRS. FENNER

See where he's gone, Ruth.

CLIFF

You'd better catch him quick, Ruth; I think he's trying to get away from you.

RUTH (*rushing to the door, putting on her fur*)

He'll be back here in a minute, apologizing.

[*Mrs. Fenner steps up to the window at the back and looks out after Snyder.*

CLIFF

Don't bring him back here. (*The door closes after Ruth, and Cliff turns down towards the right again*) I'm not giving away any houses; or putting any money into collapsible barrels, either.

MRS. FENNER (*stepping to the door to look after them*)

He's terribly quick-tempered.

CLIFF

I know all about him, Laura; you don't have to tell me a thing.

[*He goes up to the window at the back.*

MRS. FENNER

He flies up one minute, and he's all over it the next.

[*She closes the door and goes to the upper window at the left.*

CLIFF

He's certainly a fine prospect for Ruth to be teaming up with. I'm surprised at *you*, Laura, that you'd let her get mixed up with him in the first place.

MRS. FENNER (*coming forward at the left*)

Well, Heaven knows I've talked my head off to her.

CLIFF

He's one of those drifter boys — that's going to get it easy at somebody else's expense. (*Mrs. Fenner sits down in the chair at the right of the table*) I've met him three times in town during the past two weeks, and every time he's been coming from a pool match. And you know what kind of material those pool rooms turn out. (*He walks to the upper window at the left*) Ruth'll pick up the paper some morning and discover that she's married to a first-class bandit. (*He turns and goes directly across again to the foot of the stairs*) And then my house'd be used as a storage room for a lot of stolen goods.

MRS. FENNER

Well, to tell the truth, Cliff, it *was* Ruth that talked about getting one of the houses.

CLIFF

Yes, and I'll bet he put her up to it.

MRS. FENNER

No, he didn't, now, Cliff, — to give him his due; it was Ruth that spoke about it first.

CLIFF

Well, what does it matter *who* spoke about it first, Laura; the whole thing is so damned silly that it isn't worth speaking about at all. (*There is a slight pause, during which Cliff comes to a stop down at the extreme right, where he stands with his hands in his trousers' pockets, fuming; and Mrs. Fenner, appreciating the value of discretion, subsides into a meek silence, — taking her handkerchief from her bag*) I'll bet they haven't got a thousand dollars between them; and *he* doesn't like work. (*He swings up to the windows at the back and*

comes right down again) That's a great outlook for the man that they'd buy the house from.

[*He stands settling his tie at the mirror, forward.*

MRS. FENNER (*cautiously*)

Well, I'll tell you the way Ruth felt, Cliff, — I suppose she'd kill me if she knew I said anything to you; but this is what she thought. She said she knew you'd be giving her a wedding present of *some* kind; (*Cliff looks at her suspiciously, but she is occupied with a close examination of the hem of her handkerchief*) and that if you could make some arrangement with her that would make it possible for her to get hold of one of those houses — no matter how long it would take to pay it — that she'd like that better than any other kind of a present you could give her.

CLIFF

Well, I certainly didn't intend to give her any present that'd cost twelve thousand dollars, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

Oh, she didn't mean to *give* it to her, Cliff; she simply meant that if you knew she wanted it bad enough, you might stretch a point that would make it possible for her to get it for herself.

CLIFF

So she could hand it over to *him*.

[*He crosses over and up to the upper window at the left.*

MRS. FENNER

Oh, no, I'm sure Ruth is too smart ever to do anything like that.

CLIFF

Well, when she's not smart enough, Laura, to see through that bird, I haven't very much faith in *what* she'd do.

MRS. FENNER

Well, of course, it's entirely up to you, Cliff; it's your house.

CLIFF (*crossing back towards the stairs*)

Yes, and I'm going to see that he's not in it, too.

MRS. FENNER

But you know the way girls *are*, always comparing. She feels that you've always done so much for May around here; (*Cliff turns*) and that she's your niece as well as May.

[*Cliff walks directly back to within a few paces of her.*

CLIFF

May's case is an altogether different matter. May had no father. And if I wanted to do something *for* her, that's *my* business. (*He walks to the left window again, then retraces his steps*) There's nothing coming to Ruth, anyway, from me, Laura; I haven't seen her more than a half a dozen times in the last five years. Why hasn't she come over here once in a while and kept May company?

MRS. FENNER

Well, that may not have been altogether Ruth's fault, Cliff.

CLIFF

Well, I don't know whose fault it was, but it was somebody's fault. (*Going back to the left window again*) Anyway, I don't know why *I* should be expected to hand out houses to everybody that wants them; I think I've *done* my share as it is.

MRS. FENNER

Well, I just thought I'd tell you, Cliff, what was on her mind. You can talk to her yourself if she says anything.

CLIFF (*coming back to the window at the back*)

I don't want to talk to her. If she hasn't got any more sense than to figure the way she's been figuring, I don't think my talking to her would do very much good.

[*He stands looking out the window, and Mrs. Fenner sits thinking.*

MRS. FENNER (*after a slight pause*)

What do you think I ought to do about that house of *mine*, Cliff, when Ruth goes?

[*He comes forward, rather abstractedly, to the back of the lady's chair.*

CLIFF

How do you mean?

MRS. FENNER

I mean I don't like the idea of that big rent for just Dan and myself. And of course you might just as well look for diamonds as to look for a cheaper one; unless you go miles out.

CLIFF

What does *he* think about it?

MRS. FENNER

He likes it where we are.

CLIFF

Well, I guess he's the doctor, Laura; he's the one that has to pay the rent.

MRS. FENNER

I'm afraid he couldn't pay it very long, if anything happened to him.

CLIFF

Well, maybe nothing'll happen to him.

MRS. FENNER

He hasn't been so very well lately.

CLIFF

Well, I think he could keep going for a while, even if something *did* happen to him, Laura; he must have quite a bit of change salted away somewhere.

MRS. FENNER

He's spent quite a lot of money on doctor bills these last few years.

CLIFF

Well, that's about the only money he ever *did* spend, isn't it? Ever since *I* knew him.

MRS. FENNER

He hasn't spent very much on *me*, I know.

CLIFF

I don't think you need to worry about Dan Fenner's rent, Laura.

[*He paces towards the left again, and Mrs. Fenner does some more thinking. She glances toward the right door.*

MRS. FENNER

What are you going to do about this house here, Cliff?

CLIFF (*crossing back towards the foot of the stairs*)

Why, I'm going to live in it, of course; I've got to live somewhere.

MRS. FENNER

I mean, about somebody to run it?

CLIFF (*looking up the stairs*)

Oh, I'll get somebody.

MRS. FENNER

Have you looked at all, during the past two weeks?

CLIFF

No, May and Miss Plunkett said *they* wanted to tend to things themselves.

MRS. FENNER

I think you were foolish, Cliff, not to look, at least. Of course, whoever you get needn't come till Miss Plunkett goes; but it isn't always easy to get some one just when you want them. (*There is a pause. Cliff turns thoughtfully and moves to the window at the back, and Mrs. Fenner comes to a decision. She turns slightly towards him*) I was thinking the other day, Cliff — of course, it's only a suggestion — but when Ruth goes, what would you think about — *me* — coming in here? (*Cliff turns his head smoothly and pins her with a look; but she doesn't meet it*) You'll have to have *somebody;* and I don't think you have any realization of what a job it is to find a good housekeeper. Of course, Dan and I would pay our way here, just as we do now, — but I thought it would save you the bother of everlastingly looking for housekeepers, and at the same time split the living expenses for both of us.

[*Olly bustles in from the right, carrying some ironed lingerie.*

OLLY

What are you two in such solemn conference about?

MRS. FENNER

Oh, we were just talking about different things.

OLLY

What was the matter with young Mr. Snyder a while ago?

MRS. FENNER

Oh, he got into one of his tempers.

OLLY

I didn't know what to make of it; I don't think I've ever heard such loud talk in this house.

MRS. FENNER

You've heard Miss Plunkett a few times, haven't you, Olly?

[*Cliff smiles wryly.*

OLLY

Yes, but it wasn't that kind of talk.

CLIFF (*taking his gaze off Mrs. Fenner, and moving to the stairs*)

I was telling him a few truths, Olly, and they were a little too much for him.

[*He goes up the stairs. Olly moves up to the foot of the stairs and stands looking up after him, puzzled. Then she turns and looks at Mrs. Fenner.*

MRS. FENNER

What are those things you have there?

OLLY

They're some things of Miss Plunkett's I was pressing for her. (*Mrs. Fenner turns away, bitterly amused*) There are some more of them out there that I must take up, — she's packing to-night. (*She glances up the stairs again, then crosses quizzically towards Mrs. Fenner*) What was Cliff saying to Mr. Snyder, Laura?

MRS. FENNER

He disapproved of him getting married till he had some kind of an outlook.

OLLY

What did he say that made Charlie so mad?

MRS. FENNER

He said somebody would have to keep him; and Charlie resented it. I don't think myself he should have said some of the things to him that he did. *He* doesn't know anything about him.

OLLY

Maybe he's heard something, Laura.

MRS. FENNER

What could he hear, only that he happens to be out of work at the present time.

OLLY

Well, *I* heard, Laura, that he's never worked a *day* since he's been in this city.

MRS. FENNER

Who told you that?

OLLY

The woman that works for me on Fridays.

MRS. FENNER

And, what did you do, — tell Cliff that?

OLLY

No, I did not tell him; I never opened my mouth. For I knew that neither you nor Ruth would believe me, anyway.

MRS. FENNER

He worked for seven months down at the Allied Chemical Company.

OLLY

Well, this woman that comes to me on Fridays works in the house where he has a room, and she says the landlady told *her* that he never works anywhere. That he *says* he works in different places, but that he doesn't at all; and that she doesn't know *where* he gets his money.

MRS. FENNER

How did she know that you *knew* him?

OLLY

She didn't; she just happened to be telling me that the landlady had said that this young man called Snyder

had told her that he was going to be married; and that she *pitied* the girl; for he was everlastingly behind in his room rent. And then she told me the girl's name, and, of course, I knew it was Ruth. But *she* didn't realize from *my* name that there was any connection.

MRS. FENNER (*turning away*)

Well, I suppose if people believed everything they hear, Olly, nobody would *ever* get married.

OLLY

Well, I'm simply telling you what the woman told me. (*She glances toward the stairs, then resumes to Mrs. Fenner, very confidentially*) She said that last February he walked away one day without ever telling her a thing, and was gone a whole month; and that she didn't know *what* to do with his things. And when he came back, she said that he told her that he'd been called home suddenly to some place in Maryland (*Mrs. Fenner looks at her*) because of illness in the family. And he's always *said* that he came from Syracuse. She says he's a very mysterious young man — that sometimes he appears to have plenty of money, and then again there are stretches of weeks that he doesn't seem to have a penny.

MISS PLUNKETT (*coming down the stairs*)

Oh, I was just coming down for those things, Olly.

OLLY (*turning to her*)

I just got through.

MISS PLUNKETT

Hello, Laura.

MRS. FENNER (*rising*)

Good evening.

[*She crosses below the table and goes to the upper window at the left.*

OLLY
No, let me take these right on up, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT
I can take them, Olly.

OLLY
Well, I've got to get my things, anyway, Daisy. And there are some more of them out there.

MISS PLUNKETT (*going towards the right door*)
Oh, are there?

OLLY
You can bring those.

MISS PLUNKETT
Are they all ready, Olly?

OLLY
Yes, dear, they're folded there on the side table.

MRS. FENNER (*coming away from the window to the middle of the room*)
Are you going over home now, Olly?

OLLY
Yes, I'm going to get my things right away.
[*She goes on up the stairs.*

MRS. FENNER
I'll wait for you.

OLLY
I won't be five minutes.
[*Mrs. Fenner stands perfectly still in the middle of the room, realizing the failure of all her schemes. Her arms drop to her sides, and she almost breaks into tears. Suddenly she remembers Ruth and Snyder, and she steps hurriedly to the upper window at the left and peers out eagerly. The entrance of Miss Plunkett from the right door turns her back*

again into the room, and she moves slowly to the back of the chair at the left of the table.

MRS. FENNER

I hear you're going home to-morrow, Miss Plunkett.

MISS PLUNKETT (*settling the lingerie more carefully on her right arm*)

Yes, I'm going, Laura; so you'll have the field all to yourself again — till Cliff gets another housekeeper — then I suppose you'll start in on *her* the way you started in on me.

MRS. FENNER

Why, what did I do to you, Miss Plunkett?

MISS PLUNKETT (*moving slowly across towards her*)

Now, don't try to be meek, Laura; I like you better when you're yourself. You were running around here in a panic two weeks ago when I got here for fear I was going to steal your brother. (*Mrs. Fenner makes a sound of amused deprecation*) And you fixed it with Olly so that one of you would be here all the time to watch me.

MRS. FENNER

I don't know that *I've watched* you very much during the past two weeks.

MISS PLUNKETT

Because you were afraid of having trouble with your brother; and you knew that wouldn't pay you: so you packed up your things and went home, and took a chance on my doing the same thing. (*With a shift of tone*) As though your brother wasn't safer from me than he was from you. (*Mrs. Fenner darts a hard look at her, and Miss Plunkett holds it*) I *work* for *my* living; I'm not one of those women that has to hang on some *man* all her days.

MRS. FENNER

I went home because I was given to understand that you wanted to wait on yourself.

MISS PLUNKETT

So we did. But that wasn't the reason *you* went home. And to wait on us wasn't the reason you came over here, either. May told me you haven't been inside this *house* in the last four years.

MRS. FENNER (*turning away*)

Well, there were *reasons* for that, Miss Plunkett, that you know nothing about.

MISS PLUNKETT

I know the principal reason, though, Laura; there was nothing to *get*. (*Mrs. Fenner pierces her with a sudden look*) But now that your sister's gone, you're very much in evidence, — because you want to come in here yourself; (*Mrs. Fenner turns away to the lower window at the left, vastly amused*) and you're frightened to death that Cliff'll take a wife and beat you to it. (*Mrs. Fenner continues to be amused*) That's your game, Laura, I knew it before I was in here five minutes.

MRS. FENNER (*turning to her in a quiet fury*)

Why should *I* want to come in here? I have a home of my own.

MISS PLUNKETT (*maintaining her level tone*)

And you have a delicate husband; and two children that wouldn't lose a five-cent *piece* by you; and *you* know it. For that's the kind of children that women like you raise, Laura; that's the reason you want to saddle yourself on your brother, now that he's free to marry.

MRS. FENNER (*turning away again*)

Well, he hasn't married *you*, anyway.

MISS PLUNKETT

And you're going to see that he *doesn't* — by insulting me — (*Mrs. Fenner glares at her*) and every other woman that he's civil to.

MRS. FENNER

Why, who has insulted you around here?

MISS PLUNKETT

Do you think I'm blind? That I didn't get a few of those looks you shot at me the night I came here. And trying to get Cliff to blunder into telling me to go home, for fear I'd be inconvenienced. As though *you* cared whether I was inconvenienced or not. That was when you made your mistake, Laura; for I'd have been on my way a week ago only for that move. I didn't mind the looks; they were just a laugh for me; and I expected them, anyway, from what May had told me at Atlantic City. But when you started that other thing, I decided to stay here just for devilment. And I'd stay here longer only for my business.

[*She turns away towards the stairs.*

MRS. FENNER

I thought May had given you quite a report on me.

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning slowly and coming back*)

Oh, she didn't have to give me much, Laura, — just one or two things, and I could add all the rest. I have a sister that's so much like *you* that you could be her twin. One of those women that goes with her *man;* and after that all is fish that comes to your net — even if it's from your own people. I had no more idea when I came into this house about marrying your brother than you had. But you *put* it into my mind; and that's a dangerous thing to do sometimes, Laura, for some

people's minds have a way of putting ideas into practice. And I think it'd be a good thing if somebody *did* put that idea into practice; let Cliff have a bit of life of his own for a change.

[*She starts for the stairs again.*

OLLY (*coming down the stairs*)

Oh, don't meet me on the stairs, Daisy, I'm terribly superstitious.

MISS PLUNKETT (*stepping off the stairs to allow Olly to come down*)

Are you going home now, Olly?

OLLY (*appearing, with her hat on*)

Yes, I must, dear; it must be nearly eight o'clock, and Ralph said he'd be home by nine. Did you get all the things?

MISS PLUNKETT

Yes, I have them here, Olly.

OLLY (*going towards the right door*)

I must get my purse. Are you ready to go, Laura?

[*She goes out.*

MRS. FENNER

Yes, I'm waiting for you.

[*There is a dead pause; and then Mrs. Fenner gives Miss Plunkett a deadly look, and, holding her eye, moves up to the door and out. As the door closes after her, Miss Plunkett moves to the window at the back and looks stonily after her.*

OLLY (*coming in at the right*)

My left instep is just raising hobb with me again.

[*She stops before the mirror and settles her rather spectacular looking mourning hat.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*over her shoulder*)

Why didn't you put that old moccasin on, Olly, while you've been here?

OLLY

Oh, why don't I do anything that's sensible, Daisy. There I've been tramping back and forth out there in that kitchen for the last hour and it never once occurred to me to put on that old moccasin. (*Turning to the foot of the stairs*) I must say good night to Cliff and May. (*Calling up the stairs*) Good night, Cliff and May. Good night.

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning from the window and coming towards her*)

I don't think they can hear you, Olly.

OLLY (*hurrying across towards the street door*)

Well, it doesn't matter, I'll see them again in a day or two. Just tell them I said good night, will you, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT

Aren't you going to say good-by to me, Olly?

OLLY (*turning and coming back*)

Oh, my dear, you're going away to-morrow, aren't you?

MISS PLUNKETT

Bright and early.

OLLY

And I never thought of it. Isn't that terrible.

MISS PLUNKETT

I'll be on my way at nine o'clock.

OLLY (*taking hold of Miss Plunkett's arms and speaking with comic intensity*)

Well, darling child, what *am* I going to do *without* you.

MISS PLUNKETT

You'll have to write me a letter once in a while, Olly.

OLLY

But I'm such a wretched correspondent, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

You can let me know how your instep is getting along.

[*They both laugh.*

OLLY

Well, really, we've talked so much the last few times I've been over here that I think that's about the only topic left.

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, you can send me a postal card, anyway; let me know you're living.

OLLY

Oh, indeed I will, Daisy. But, I *do* think it's dreadful that you can't stay a bit longer.

MISS PLUNKETT

I'm a working woman, Olly; I've stayed too long already.

OLLY

Oh, I think you've worked long enough, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, what am I going to do, Olly? I can't get any man to keep me.

[*Olly gives a scandalized little laugh.*

OLLY

Well, the next time I see you, I hope you *will* have a man to keep you. (*Daisy laughs*) And a very *good* man, too.

MISS PLUNKETT

Now, don't wish that on any poor man, Olly.

OLLY

Yes I do. And I think he'd be very lucky no matter who he was.

MISS PLUNKETT (*looking away*)
I'm afraid that's not in the books for me, Olly.

OLLY
Well, now, you can't tell, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT
No.

OLLY
Well, I'm going to hope it is, anyway. Good-by, dear.
[*She kisses Miss Plunkett.*

MISS PLUNKETT
Good-by, Olly.

OLLY
It's been a *real* pleasure to meet you.

MISS PLUNKETT
Same to you, dear.

OLLY
And I hope you've enjoyed your visit.

MISS PLUNKETT
I've had a *grand* time, Olly.
[*They both laugh, and Olly turns away, going towards the street door again.*

OLLY
And, I'm really going to think seriously about what you said about my hair.

MISS PLUNKETT (*moving after her*)
I think you're foolish if you don't, Olly.

OLLY (*opening the door*)
Well, I'm going to think about it.

MISS PLUNKETT
I think you've got just the head and neck for it.

OLLY
Well, maybe the next time you *see* me it'll be bobbed.
[*She laughs and goes out, leaving the door open.*
MISS PLUNKETT
Write and tell me when you do it.
OLLY
All right, I will.
MISS PLUNKETT
Good-by, Olly.
OLLY
Good-by, Daisy.
[*Miss Plunkett stands holding the door open, looking after her.*
MAY (*running down the stairs, excitedly*)
Daisy! (*Miss Plunkett closes the door and comes towards her*) Daisy!
MISS PLUNKETT
What's the matter?
MAY (*seizing Miss Plunkett by the arms*)
I've been talking to Uncle Cliff upstairs and he's going to ask you. He says he'll be down in a minute.
MISS PLUNKETT
Going to ask me what?
MAY
Going to ask you to stay here.
MISS PLUNKETT
Now, what's the use of anybody asking me that, May; I've told you that I can't stay here any longer.
MAY
Well, he's going to ask you, anyway.
MISS PLUNKETT
I've got a home and I've got to go to it.

MAY

Well, he's going to ask you to stay here all the time.

MISS PLUNKETT

What? What are you saying?

MAY

Uncle Cliff's going to ask you to stay here all the time. He just told me so upstairs.

MISS PLUNKETT

Now, how can I stay here all the time, May? What about my business?

MAY

Well, that's what he's going to ask you. I asked him to, and he said he intended to, anyway.

MISS PLUNKETT

What have you been saying to your Uncle Cliff, May?

[*Cliff comes down the stairs, and Miss Plunkett steps across in front of May towards him.*

MAY

I haven't been saying anything to him, Daisy; he said it to me.

MISS PLUNKETT

What's this nut kid been saying to you upstairs there, Cliff?

[*Cliff laughs and crosses below the lady's chair towards the table at the left. He has put on a rather fancy tie, and combed his hair a bit more carefully.*

MAY

I didn't say anything, did I, Uncle Cliff?

MISS PLUNKETT

She's been giving me a line of talk here that's got me all non compos McGinnis.

[*Cliff laughs, and May moves across above Miss Plunkett and comes forward at the right.*

CLIFF (*lighting a cigar*)

She doesn't like the idea of your going home, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

Well, I'm not so crazy about it myself, to tell you the truth, Cliff, after bumming for a whole month. But what can a poor girl do? I'm a business woman.

CLIFF

I don't think you've done much bumming this past two weeks, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

Oh, that was fun for me, Cliff; I've had a grand time. And I don't mind housework, anyway — I'm used to it; especially in a house like this, where there's lots of light and air: and where it looks like something when you've finished.

MAY

Do you want me to take those things upstairs for you, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT (*turning to her and giving her the lingerie*)

Yes, I wish you would, May. Just put them with the others, and I'll pack them when I come up. (*May runs up the stairs, and Cliff turns away and moves thoughtfully over to the extreme left and looks out the window. Miss Plunkett steps forward to the mirror and touches her hair*) I don't think you ever realize how much junk you've got till you start to pack it up to go away somewhere. (*Turning to the back of the lady's chair and settling the little tidy*) You know, that little nut thinks all I've got to to do is fool around here with *her* from now on. My business will take care of itself, you know.

CLIFF (*coming back to a point below the table, rather solemnly*)

Well, I'll tell you what I was thinking, Daisy. — The three of us seem to get along so well together here, and you seem to like this place so well, that I was wondering if you'd care to *change* your business.

MISS PLUNKETT (*casually*)

How do you mean, Cliff?

CLIFF

I'd like you to come in here as my wife, — if you'd care to.

[*Miss Plunkett regards him for a second with amused suspicion.*

MISS PLUNKETT

Now, listen, Cliff, — you don't want to marry *me.*

CLIFF

Why not?

MISS PLUNKETT

Because you don't. You're only asking me because *May* wants me here.

CLIFF

No, I'm not, Daisy; I've been thinking about asking you for over a week.

MISS PLUNKETT

But it's twenty years since I was twenty, Cliff; and you're a good-looking man.

CLIFF

Well, it's twenty-*three* years since I was twenty; and I think you're a good-looking woman.

MISS PLUNKETT

Now, I *know* you're kidding me.

CLIFF

No, I'm not at all, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

But, listen, Cliff — can you see *me* with the veil and the orange blossoms? Ho! My God, there'd be a riot in Harrisburg.

[*She laughs, and steps down and across to the chair at the right, below the door.*

CLIFF (*laughing, and sitting down in the chair at the right of the table*)

Well, I'd like you to think it over, Daisy. I haven't exactly been in a position to marry up till this time; but I think it's the thing for me to do right now. You and May seem to get along so well together; and you heard Old Filoon say that if I didn't *bring* somebody in, somebody would *come* in.

[*He laughs.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*laughing faintly*)

Well, I think myself, Cliff, from what I've seen around here, that it'd be the wise thing for you to do.

CLIFF

I think so myself. And the more I've thought of it, the more I've realized that it might be a very difficult matter to find somebody that'ud just — (*He becomes inarticulate*) I don't know just how to say it to you, Daisy. Of course, the proposition may not appeal to you at all. I remember you said the first night you were here that you were a free woman and that that was the way you were going to stay.

MISS PLUNKETT (*leaning on the back of the chair, and with a touch of weariness*)

Oh, I guess we all say a lot of things in a lifetime, Cliff, that we don't really mean. We say them because we

think there's nothing else *for* us, I guess, — and try to kid ourselves into believing we mean them.

CLIFF

I think you'd be happy here, Daisy.

MISS PLUNKETT

Yes, I'd be happy, Cliff.

CLIFF

We'd do our best to make you so, anyway. *May* is fond of you; and, personally, I'd like to feel that there was some woman to have an eye to her. And as far as you are concerned, I think we're both sensible enough to make a go of it.

[*She looks at him and laughs, a bit ironically; and he laughs too.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*moving across to the back of the lady's chair*)

Oh, I don't think we'd need to worry about that, Cliff. And I think it's *very* nice of you to ask me.

CLIFF

Well, I think it'd be nicer, Daisy, if you'd try to think favorably of it.

MISS PLUNKETT (*leaning on the back of the lady's chair and looking away off*)

I will, Cliff; I guess I'd be foolish if I didn't. For I've always thought I'd *like* to be married — to some steady man — that smoked good cigars — (*She gives a faint little laugh, which he reflects*) and live in an old-fashioned house — with trees around it — and just sit there in the evening and listen to some doll of a daughter play the piano — while I made dresses for her.

[*She laughs a little again.*

CLIFF

Well, I'm sure May'd be only too glad to play the piano for you if you'd make dresses for her.

[*He laughs.*

MISS PLUNKETT (*still looking wistfully out and away*)

Yes, I guess this is it. And I guess it's coming to me.

[*May comes running down the stairs.*

CLIFF

How about that, May?

MAY

What?

[*She stops in the middle of the room, between Cliff and Miss Plunkett.*

CLIFF

Daisy says she'll marry me and stay here if you'll play the piano for her

MAY (*turning to Miss Plunkett eagerly*)

Did you, Daisy?

CLIFF

And she says she'll make dresses for you while you play.

MAY

Oh Daisy — you'll be a June bride.

[*Cliff laughs, but Miss Plunkett merely smiles, strangely, and lays her hand on May's arm.*

MISS PLUNKETT

There's not going to be anything like that, dear. Just in and out, and get it over with.

MAY

Do you want me to play something now for you, Daisy?

MISS PLUNKETT (*still abstractedly*)

Yes, play me something, Kid.

[*May rushes to the piano.*

CLIFF

And I'll blow cigar smoke at you, Daisy.

[*She looks at him and smiles faintly.*

MISS PLUNKETT

That'll be grand. (*She moves forward at the left of the chair, Cliff watching her*) And I'll sit here in the lady's chair. I've always wanted to *be* a lady.

[*She sits down in the lady's chair and rocks quietly back and forth. May starts to play the piano, Grieg's "To Spring." After several bars, Miss Plunkett slowly shifts her eyes and they meet Cliff's. He smiles, and blows a long line of smoke towards her. Then he laughs faintly. But she only smiles and lets her gaze wander away off again. She is listening to the music of "To Spring."*

THE CURTAIN DESCENDS VERY SLOWLY

PROMENADE, ALL!

DAVID V. ROBISON

(Little Theatre) Comedy

3 Men, 1 Woman, Interior

Four actors play four successive generations of the same family, as their business grows from manufacturing buttons to a conglomerate of international proportions (in the U.S. their perfume will be called Belle Nuit; but in Paris, Enchanted Evening). The Broadway cast included Richard Backus, Anne Jackson, Eli Wallach and Hume Cronyn. Miss Jackson performed as either mother or grandmother, as called for; and Cronyn and Wallach alternated as fathers and grandfathers; with Backus playing all the roles of youth. There are some excellent cameos to perform, such as the puritanical mother reading the Bible to her son without realizing the sexual innuendoes; or the 90-year-old patriarch who is agreeable to trying an experiment in sexology but is afraid of a heart attack.

"So likeable; jolly and splendidly performed."—*N.Y. Daily News*. "The author has the ability to write amusing lines, and there are many of them."—*N.Y. Post*. "Gives strong, lively actors a chance for some healthy exercise. And what a time they have at it!"—*CBS-TV*.

ROYALTY, $50-$35

ACCOMMODATIONS

NICK HALL

(Little Theatre) Comedy

2 Men, 2 Women, Interior

Lee Schallert, housewife, feeling she may be missing out on something, leaves her husband, Bob, and her suburban home and moves into a two-room Greenwich Village apartment with two roommates. One roommate, Pat, is an aspiring actress, never out of characters or costumes, but, through an agency mix up, the other roommate is a serious, young, graduate student—male. The ensuing complications make a hysterical evening.

"An amusing study of marital and human relations . . . a gem . . . It ranks as one of the funniest ever staged."—*Labor Herald*. "The audience at Limestone Valley Dinner Theater laughed at "Accommodations" until it hurt."—*News American*. "Superior theater, frivolous, perhaps, but nonetheless superior. It is light comedy at its best."—*The Sun, Baltimore*.

ROYALTY, $50-$25

THE GOOD DOCTOR

NEIL SIMON

(All Groups) Comedy

2 Men, 3 Women. Various settings.

With Christopher Plummer in the role of the Writer, we are introduced to a composite of Neil Simon and Anton Chekhov, from whose short stories Simon adapted the capital vignettes of this collection. Frances Sternhagen played, among other parts, that of a harridan who storms a bank and upbraids the manager for his gout and lack of money. A father takes his son to a house where he will be initiated into the mysteries of sex, only to relent at the last moment, and leave the boy more perplexed than ever. In another sketch a crafty seducer goes to work on a wedded woman, only to realize that the woman has been in command from the first overture. Let us not forget the classic tale of a man who offers to drown himself for three rubles. The stories are droll, the portraits affectionate, the humor infectious, and the fun unending.

"As smoothly polished a piece of work as we're likely to see all season."—*N.Y. Daily News.* "A great deal of warmth and humor —vaudevillian humor—in his retelling of these Chekhovian tales."—*Newhouse Newspapers.* "There is much fun here . . . Mr. Simon's comic fancy is admirable."—*N.Y. Times.*

(Music available. Write for particulars.)
ROYALTY, $50-$35

The Prisoner of Second Avenue

NEIL SIMON

(All Groups) Comedy

2 Men, 4 Women, Interior

Mel is a well-paid executive of a fancy New York company which has suddenly hit the skids and started to pare the payroll. Anxiety doesn't help; Mel, too, gets the ax. His wife takes a job to tide them over, then she too is sacked. As if this weren't enough, Mel is fighting a losing battle with the very environs of life. Polluted air is killing everything that grows on his terrace; the walls of the high-rise apartment are paper-thin, so that the private lives of a pair of German stewardesses next door are open books to him; the apartment is burgled; and his psychiatrist dies with $23,000 of his money. Mel does the only thing left for him to do: he has a nervous breakdown. It is on recovery that we come to esteem him all the more. For Mel and his wife and people like them have the resilience, the grit to survive.

"Now all this, mind you, is presented primarily in humorous terms."—*N.Y. Daily News.* "A gift for taking a grave subject and, without losing sight of its basic seriousness, treating it with hearty but sympathetic humor . . . A talent for writing a wonderfully funny line . . . full of humor and intelligence . . . Fine fun."—*N.Y. Post.* "Creates an atmosphere of casual cataclysm, and everyday urban purgatory of copelessness from which laughter seems to be released like vapor from the city's manholes."—*Time.*

ROYALTY, $50-$35

A COMMUNITY OF TWO

JEROME CHODOROV

(All Groups) Comedy

4 Men, 3 Women, Interior

Winner of a Tony Award for "Wonderful Town." Co-author of "My Sister Eileen," "Junior Miss," "Anniversary Waltz." This is a charming off-beat comedy about Alix Carpenter, a fortyish divorcee of one month who has been locked out of her own apartment and is rescued by her thrice-divorced neighbor across the hall, Michael Jardeen. During the course of the two hours in which it takes to play out the events of the evening, we meet Alix's ex-husband, a stuffed shirt from Wall Street, her son, who has run away from prep school with his girl, heading for New Mexico and a commune. Michael's current girl friend, Olga, a lady anthropologist just back from Lapland, and Mr. Greenberg, a philosopher-locksmith. All take part in the hilarious doings during a blizzard that rages outside the building and effects everybody's lives. But most of all, and especially, we get to know the eccentric Michael Jardeen, and the confused and charming Alix Carpenter, who discover that love might easily happen, even on a landing, in the course of a couple of hours of highstress living.

"Thoroughly delightful comedy."—*St. Louis-Post Dispatch*. "A joy."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*. "Skillful fun by Jerome Chodorov."—*Toronto Globe Star*.

ROYALTY, $50-$35

ROMAN CONQUEST

JOHN PATRICK

(All Groups) Comedy

One set—3 Women, 6 Men

The romantic love story of two American girls living in the romantic city of Rome in a romantic garret at the foot of the famous Spanish steps. One of the world's richest young women takes her less fortunate girl friend to Italy to hide unknown and escape notoriety while she attempts to discover if she has any talent as an artist—free of position and prestige. Their misadventures with language and people supply a delightful evening of pure entertainment. Remember the movies "Three Coins in the Fountain" and "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing"? This new comedy is in the same vein by the same Pulitzer Prize winning playwright.

ROYALTY, $50-$35

COUNT DRACULA

TED TILLER

(All Groups) Mystery comedy

7 Men, 2 Women. Interior with Small Inset

1930 Costumes (optional)

Based on Bram Stoker's 19th Century novel, "Dracula." This is a new, witty version of the classic story of a suave vampire whose passion is sinking his teeth into the throats of beautiful young women. Mina, his latest victim, is the ward of Dr. Seward in whose provincial insane asylum the terrifying action transpires. Her finance arrives from London, worried over her strange inertia and trance-like state. Equally concerned is Professor Van Helsing, specialist in rare maladies, who senses the supernatural at work. Added trouble comes from Sybil, Dr. Sewards demented, sherry-tippling sister and from Renfield, a schizophrenic inmate in league with the vampire. But how to trap this ghoul who can transform himself into a bat, materialize from fog, dissolve in mist? There are many surprising but uncomplicated stage effects, mysterious disappearances, secret panels, howling wolves, bats that fly over the audience, an unexpected murder, and magic tricks which include Dracula's vanishing in full view of the spectators.

Despite much gore, ". . . the play abounds with funny lines. There is nothing in it but entertainment."—*Springfield, Mass. News.*

ROYALTY, $50-$25

FRANKENSTEIN

TIM KELLY

(All Groups)

4 Men, 4 Women, Interior

Victor Frankenstein, a brilliant young scientist, returns to his chateau on the shores of Lake Geneva to escape some terrible pursuer. No one can shake free the dark secret that terrifies him. Not his mother, nor his financee Elizabeth, nor his best friend, Henry Clerval. Even the pleading of a gypsy girl accused of murdering Victor's younger brother falls on deaf ears, for Victor has brought into being a "Creature" made from bits and pieces of the dead! The Creature tracks Victor to his sanctuary to demand a bride to share its loneliness—one as wretched as the Creature itself. Against his better judgment, Victor agrees and soon the household is invaded by murder, despair and terror! The play opens on the wedding night of Victor and Elizabeth, the very time the Creature has sworn to kill the scientist for destroying its intended mate, and ends, weeks later, in a horrific climax of dramatic suspense! In between there is enough macabre humor to relieve the mounting tension. Perhaps the truest adaptation of Mary Shelley's classic yet. Simple to stage and a guaranteed audience pleaser.

ROYALTY, $25.00

HOME-BUILT

Lighting Equipment

for The Small Stage

By THEODORE FUCHS

This volume presents a series of fourteen simplified designs for building various types of stage lighting and control equipment, with but one purpose in mind—to enable the amateur producer to acquire a complete set of stage lighting equipment at the lowest possible cost. The volume is 8½" x 11" in size, with heavy paper and spiral binding—features which make the volume well suited to practical workshop use.

Community Theatre

A MANUAL FOR SUCCESS

By JOHN WRAY YOUNG

The ideal text for anyone interested in participating in Community Theatre as a vocation or avocation. "Organizing a Community Theatre," "A Flight Plan for the Early Years," "Programming for People—Not Computers," and other chapters are blueprints for solid growth. "Technical, Business and Legal Procedures" cuts a safe and solvent path through some tricky undergrowth. Essential to the library of all community theatres, and to the schools who will supply them with talent in the years to come.

The Tandem Library

A Selection of 20 Plays from

All in the Family

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Maude

For details of titles available and royalty fees apply to Samuel French, Inc.

The Happy Hunter

(ALL GROUPS)

Comedy—CHARLES FEYDEAU

English Adaptation by Barnett Shaw

7 Men, 3 Women—2 Interiors

Chandel tells Yvonne he is going hunting with Castillo, but when Castillo turns up unexpectedly, she sees the hoax, and therefore decides to yield to Roussel's amorous advances, going to his bachelor den with him. But, across the hall, Chandel is having a rendezvous with Madame Castillo. A hectic evening ensues, complicated by an eccentric landlady and by the appearance of Yvonne's nephew, whose girl friend used to live there. The police, seeking Madame Castillo's lover, grab Roussel, while Chandel escapes through the window and runs off with Roussel's trousers. The mix-up unravels in act three, with one surprise after the other, Yvonne winning all tricks while her husband gets the punishment.

ROYALTY, $35-$25

WITHDRAWN
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A Gown for His Mistress

(Little Theatre) Farce

GEORGE FEYDEAU

English Translation by Barnett Shaw

4 Men, 6 Females—Interior

Can be played 1900 Period or Chic Modern

A wild and saucy matrimonial mix-up by the celebrated author of A FLEA IN HER EAR.

Dr. Moulineaux stays out all night after a futile attempt to meet his mistress, Suzanne, at the Opera Ball. He tells his wife he has been up all night with a friend, Bassinet, who is near death, but at that moment Bassinet walks in. Upbraided by his mother-in-law for his infidelity, he decides he must no longer allow Suzanne to pretend to be a patient. For a hide-away, he rents an apartment that formerly belonged to a dressmaker. In Act II he is courting Suzanne in his new apartment when her husband walks in. Posing as a dressmaker he gets rid of the husband momentarily, but is caught in a desperate entanglement when his wife, his mother-in-law, Bassinet, and Bassinet's wife appear. In Act III, Moulineaux's household is in an uproar but he manages to lie his way out of it all with the help of Bassinet who has a photograph that seems to solve everything. Outstanding male and female roles. The play moves rapidly and is an excellent work-out for alert actors and actresses.

ROYALTY, $35-$25

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BOB RANDALL

(Little Theatre) Comedy

4 Men, 4 Women, Interior

A vacant apartment with a river view is open for inspection by prospective tenants, and among them are a man and a woman who have never met before. They are the last to leave and, when they get ready to depart, they find that the door is locked and they are shut in. Since they are attractive young people, they find each other interesting and the fact that both are happily married adds to their delight of mutual, yet obviously sepa-

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THE SEA HORSE

EDWARD J. MOORE

(Little Theatre) Drama
1 Man, 1 Woman, Interior

It is a play that is, by turns, tender, ribald, funny and suspenseful. Audiences everywhere will take it to their hearts because it is touched with humanity and illuminates with glowing sympathy the complexities of a man-woman relationship. Set in a West Coast waterfront bar, the play is about Harry Bales, a seaman, who, when on shore leave, usually heads for "The Sea Horse," the bar run by Gertrude Blum, the heavy, unsentimental proprietor. Their relationship is purely physical and, as the play begins, they have never confided their private yearnings to each other. But this time Harry has returned with a dream: to buy a charter fishing boat and to have a son by Gertrude. She, in her turn, has made her life one of hard work, by day, and nocturnal love-making; she has encased her heart behind a facade of toughness, utterly devoid of sentimentality, because of a failed marriage. Irwin's play consists in the ritual of "dance" courtship by Harry of Gertrude, as these two outwardly abrasive characters fight, make up, fight again, spin dreams, deflate them, make love and reveal their long locked-up secrets.

"A burst of brilliance!"—*N.Y. Post.* "I was touched close to tears!"—*Village Voice.* "A must! An incredible love story. A beautiful play?"—*Newhouse Newspapers.* "A major new playwright!"—*Variety.*

ROYALTY, $50-$35

THE AU PAIR MAN

HUGH LEONARD

(Little Theatre) Comedy
1 Man, 1 Woman, Interior

The play concerns a rough Irish bill collector named Hartigan, who becomes a love slave and companion to an English lady named Elizabeth, who lives in a cluttered London town house, which looks more like a museum for a British Empire on which the sun has long set. Even the door bell chimes out the national anthem. Hartigan is immediately conscripted into her service in return for which she agrees to teach him how to be a gentleman rather after the fashion of a reverse Pygmalion. The play is a wild one, and is really the never-ending battle between England and Ireland. Produced to critical acclaim at Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theatre.

ROYALTY, $50-$35

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